



« Women in fisheries and aquaculture in Europe »
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WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACE



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AOC:	Certified Origine's appellation (Appellation d'origine contrôlée)
AREAL:	Asociacion de Profesionales del Marisqueo a Pie de Galicia
BEP:	Certificate of Technical Education (Brevet d'enseignement professionnel)
BTS:	Advanced Vocational Diploma (Brevet Technicien Supérieur)
CCFD:	Catholic Committee against hunger and for development
CFP:	Common Fisheries Policy
CEASM:	Association for the development of maritime activity
CIVAM:	Help Centre for Promoting Agriculture and Rural Affairs
CUMP:	Medical-Psychological Emergency Unit
DG:	Directorate General
ENIM:	French social security for seamen
ENIM:	Social Security Funds
FAF Pêche:	Fisheries' Training Fund
FETEM:	Women between Earth and Sea
FIFEL:	Inter-regional Federation of Coastal Women
FINKO:	Women's Committee of the Fishing Industry (Fiskerinæringens Kvinneutvalg)
ESF:	European Social Fund
ICSF:	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
IMP:	Maritime Accident Prevention Institute
ITQ:	Individual Transferable Quotas
FIFG:	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance
IFREMER:	French Research Institute for the Exploitation of the Sea
NF:	Norges Fiskerlag
NFFO:	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
NFK:	Norwegian Fisherwomen's Association (Norges Fiskarkvinnelage)
NGO:	No Governmental Organisations
NOW:	New opportunities for Women
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
P.O.:	Producers' Organisation
SWFPA:	Scottish White Fish Producers' Organisation
TAC:	Total Allowable Catches
PFD:	Personal Flotation Devices
2FM:	Federation for Women in a Maritime Environment
3FM:	Federation of fisherwomen and fishers families

P R E A M B L E

SECOND WORKSHOP OF THE *FEMMES* PROGRAM

« WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACE »



This document constitutes the record of the second European workshop for the FEMMES programme, which took place between 25th and 27th September 2003 at the Hotel Silveria in the city of Vasa, in Finland. This workshop brought together forty-two participants from nine European countries. The majority of these were the wives or partners of European fishers and fish and shellfish farmers. Other participants were social science researchers, national civil servants working in this field and permanent representatives of fishermen's organisations. The workshop was based around the theme of: "women in the public sphere".

BACKGROUND

As we noticed during the Brest workshop (February 2003), in the past women have been kept out of public debate linked to fishing and aquaculture. The need to form associations often arises in response to crises rocking their sector. This is true of both fishing and aquaculture, as female shellfish farmers have always called for recognition for their contribution within family enterprises. Women's organisations were created and multiplied at the end of the 1990s in most countries, but there are some older ones: they date from 1946 in Norway and from the early 1960s in Ireland. Through these organisations, women have also made demands for legal recognition of their participation within family fishing enterprises. Forming organisation affords them greater visibility with the political authorities and with the various institutions linked to the fishing sector. In France, members of Parliament were made aware of the existence of women's role in fisheries,

which was considered to be an exclusively male field. During the debate on the framework of the fisheries law in the French Parliament (1997) women chose to intervene to request a specific legal status.

Little by little, women's organisations gained influence and obtained, at least in some countries, recognition for their contribution, which up to that point was totally informal, through the assignment of a legal status enabling them to claim their own pension upon retirement (France). Furthermore, they started to take part in a number of public debates, such as safety at sea and also regarding social issues linked to the fishing industry.

It is on this basis, that it has been decided to devote the second workshop to the issue of "*women in the public space*" with two objectives: to talk about the reasons leading up to the creation of these organisations, the running and management of the associations and women's participation in collective action. Furthermore, the benefits of associations have to be put across to women who have not yet organised themselves. The exchange of experiences and ideas should be of use to all concerned.

THE PROCEEDINGS CONTENTS

For the records of the first FEMMES programme workshop held in Brest in February 2003, it has been chosen to produce a synthesis of the presentations and debates. For this document the choice was different, presentations and discussions are fully reproduced as the written texts from the various communications were obtained. Proofreading was required for the purposes of consistency. The texts have been translated from English into French and vice versa. The texts in Spanish were first translated into French, and then into English.

These proceedings have been separated into two main themes presented in two parts: One part deals with the reasons which influenced (or are influencing) women to group together, while the other looks at women's participation in joint initiatives. The presentations raise questions which can simultaneously illustrate several themes dealt with in the workshop. Their distribution in the various sections of this document was not always easy to arrange, particularly in the first part. We have chosen to assign texts to one or other section, depending on what we deem to be the most salient points.

I - WHY GROUP TOGETHER?

The presentations reveal that many reasons influence women to group: demands for legal status, the need for training, amongst others. We can therefore see that women are seeking to obtain and defend a place in society. By organising themselves, they gain a dynamism which helps them in this task. Their public existence has caused the European authorities as well as the public authorities in some countries to recognise them and invite them to take part in debates concerning not only women, but also the fishing and aquaculture industry. Women's organisations have therefore acquired a certain level of political influence, and have found their place in the industry.

There is no single organisation for women at European level. Each group works with its own national situation and makes very gradual progress. In some countries (France, the Netherlands, Ireland), women have built up independent organisations, as there has been no place for them in men's organisations. In other countries (Finland, Spain), they are members of male organisations. And still more groups of women (Norway), after having been members of men's organisations, went on to found their own. In countries where fishermen and aquaculturists have less formed organisations women have not grouped together in associations either (Portugal, Greece). European exchanges between women in the fishing and aquaculture industry, assisted by the Fisheries DG of the European Commission and by the FEMMES programme, have had a positive impact in Greece and Italy, culminating in the creation of associations. For their part, Portuguese women have proved the need to form an organisation, but have yet to take the necessary steps. In the United Kingdom and Ireland, women have started up an informal network led by a young researcher.

1 - To defend women's place

1.1. Equal access to fishing rights

In these records, we have chosen to highlight the struggle led by women from the Tyrius association from the town of El Palmar, near Valencia, Spain. They demand equal rights between men and women for access to fishing resources.

The aim of the Tyrius association is to enable women to hold fishing rights and to issue them. The local fishermen's organisation refuses to allow women to fish in the lagoon, and

go further by refusing to allow them to pass on fishing rights to their children. This organisation has been punished by the Spanish courts several times, which have requested it to amend its regulations. For the time being, the requested changes have not been made and women are carrying on their fight. They simply request the application of a fundamental principle – that of equality between men and women – which appears in all basic European and national laws.

1.2. Training

Training attracts women seeking to improve or refresh their skills, to build up their self-confidence, to manage the family company better, and occasionally to look for salaried positions in other sectors.

For women who stay at home over the long term in order to look after children and the family, training constitutes a form of emancipation. They need to rediscover their own abilities to get up to speed before going into salary work. Training is essential to enable them to fit into the world of work. It also raises their awareness of the activities that they carry out within family businesses.

While women are mainly satisfied with the initial training that they have followed, they are not satisfied with the follow-up training. Existing courses offer women the possibility of learning the basic essentials in management, accountancy, law, marketing, but they don't go so far as to improve the management of family fishing enterprise or to find work in another industry. French women are also demanding courses that are made worthwhile with diplomas. The experience reported by Monique Philippe (France) shows that women in her association, whose training results in a diploma, have met with success in their job searches.

The level of training and of diploma requested varies not only from one country to another, but also from one woman to another. It ranges from the primary school diploma (Portugal) to the secondary diploma (France) and up to a university diploma (Finland, Norway, and United Kingdom). The introduction of Open universities education helps people to gain university diplomas.

The presentation of Gunnel Edman-Blum (Sweden) highlights the need to organise lessons for women seeking to diversify the activities of their family businesses. Swedish and Finnish women know that an increase in family income has to come about through the marketing of catches and the fishing profession. Specific training has to be introduced to meet their needs. The development of activities such as fish processing, sport fishing or excursions out at sea can make a lasting contribution to the development of coastal areas.

Training is also necessary for any women working directly in fisheries production. The presentation of Pencha Raposo (Spain) shows how, during training courses, Galician *mariscadoras* (shallow-water shellfish farmers) have become aware of the importance of managing not only the stocks, but also the market.

Funding for training remains an obstacle for women's associations who want to take such steps. The French examples demonstrate that some regions listen to women's demands and find the means to introduce training courses. The political authorities of these regions are aware that regional development requires better qualifications for women, and they are ready to give them some assistance. Implementation of training courses is still rather long, which may be somewhat discouraging. The situation is not the same in all European countries. Each country follows its own logic and its own steps regarding financing. In some countries (Spain, Sweden, Finland), women have access to lessons organised by fishermen's organisations, mainly funded by European social funds (ESF) or by Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). In other countries (France, The Netherlands), they do not have the right to take such courses – much less have access to European funding. In France, women who have opted for the status of “*collaborative spouse*” may benefit from adult education administered by the Fisheries' Training Fund (*FAF-pêche*) just like their husbands can.

2 - To gain a political weight

By creating organisations, women are gaining better political visibility. The presentation made by Françoise-Edmonde Morin (France) shows that it is precisely the fact that fishermen's wives have joined forces that enables them to negotiate with the public and political authorities to gain legal status.

Sonja-Hellen Sele (Norway) reports that women are no longer reluctant to speak for themselves and address politicians about subjects relevant to their lives. The NFK association is currently seeking to amend legislation regarding the transmission of fishing quotas. At the moment, fishing rights are linked to the boat-owners and not to the vessels themselves. In the event of the death of a spouse, widows may not claim any quotas, as they are not fishing professionals. Fishing rights are lost. But a fishing vessel with no fishing rights is worthless. Therefore these women, after having made many years' contribution to the economic life of the fishing company, find themselves unable to carry on their activity. The demands made by the *Norges Fiskarkvinnelag* (NFK) are under debate and have a good chance of ending up with a satisfactory agreement for women.

In the 1960s, the lack of communication provided the impetus for Irish women to start up an informal organisation to gain information about husbands and sons on board fishing boats. *Mna Na Mara* association finds its origins on this. It has now taken on a whole new dimension, enabling it to occupy a place at the heart of the fishing industry (Brid Duff-Duncan).

In The Netherlands, women in the fishing industry decided to set up a network four years ago. Fishermen's organisations did not welcome this, initially. Its work for the defence of the interests of the fishing community during various crises afflicting the industry then enabled the VinVis network to earn some solid recognition within the fishing world. We should note that its leader comes from outside the industry (Cornelie Quist).

The presentation of Annie Rouquette (France) shows that female oyster farmers from the Thau pond have taken control of their future by grouping together. Their association enables them to gain access to professional organisations, even if they are not yet fully acquainted with how the system works. Thanks to their organisation and with logistical and financial assistance supplied by an agricultural association, they have succeeded in properly undertaking a local development project to defend their production site and to sell their shellfish.

3 - To face management constraints

In Europe, fisherwomen's organisations are faced different of constraints: the refusal of men's organisations to integrate them (France, The Netherlands), the lack of financial

resources, the renewal of association chiefs and the difficulty of managing a group structure, without lapsing into defending personal interests.

3.1. To join the men or not?

In some countries, women choose to integrate with fishermen's organisations. As an example, groups of *mariscadoras* have integrated with their male colleagues. They now often occupy positions of responsibility within *Cofradias* (*fishermen organisations*). Their role within *Cofradias* is consolidated by strengthening their professional status, and also by the auction of their produce: funding for Spanish fishermen's organisations is provided through a percentage taken from auctions, with *mariscadoras* groups contributing to the funding of professional structures as well as men (Isabel Perez).

Conversely, the presentation of Nicki Holmyard (Scotland) throws light on the problems encountered by female Scottish shellfish farmers in finding a place in a professional organisation dominated by men. Women always find it difficult to combine their family and professional lives. This situation marginalizes them within men's organisations. For Nicki Holmyard, the creation of a separate organisation may be the only solution. She thinks that by taking their own action, women are strengthening their position within professional bodies, as they will be able to show their ability to act in the interests of the profession and to assume responsibilities.

Apart from *mariscadoras* groups, which are the only women to benefit from professional recognition, practically all other organisations are coming up against financial constraints, generational renewal and leadership issues.

3.2. Financial constraints

The lack of funds is often mentioned as the cause for abandoning association activities. In most cases, the activity of the organisation relies on volunteer work, which for many participants has its limits. Some women's organisations have succeeded in funding a permanent secretary, following the example of the Norwegian NFK association, which benefits from long-term public funding. These subsidies are currently under threat of being stopped, which would pose problems for Norwegian women, as they would no longer be able to pay their employee. Their activity, structured around this employee's presence, risks being strongly affected (Gunda Nielsen).

Hiring an employee limits the funds available for the association's initiatives. The French federation of fisherwomen and fishers families (2FM) also employs a permanent secretary, paid for through public subsidies. The subsidies are not directly intended for hiring an employee, as they should be used to generate studies and reports (Françoise-Edmonde Morin). But the payments depend on the work to be carried out and on the policies implemented by the various government departments. These are generally funds originating from E.S.F.

Finnish women (Lena Talvitie), upon forming their association, decided to join with a men's organisation in order to benefit from the financial aid that it could provide. Working with women from other Scandinavian countries, the association made contributions to drawing up studies funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. When the Council halted its financial contribution, the organisations were put on hold. The lack of money does not, however, constitute the only reason for the associations' failure. The mobilisation of women is a factor equally as decisive as funding. Women act on a local level, but cannot really be said to mobilise themselves. They refuse to take part in meetings organised outside their own communities. Meanwhile, the crisis in the Finnish fishing industry has caused women to seek employment outside the sector. Salaried employment and domestic duties, insofar as all the family responsibilities fall on their shoulders, reduce the amount of time that women can devote to political activism and to volunteer work.

3.3. Generational renewal

Renewal for association members and leaders was another constraint identified during this workshop. Liliane Capobianco explains that it is difficult to find women available to work within the association in positions of responsibility. For a number of years now, the Corsican association, which groups together around fifty women, has been unable to find somebody to take the helm and carry out the administrative work and external representation. Filling out forms for subsidies and taking part in national meetings requires time that a lot of women cannot afford to give. This is far from being an isolated case. Many associations rely on goodwill and the work of two or three people.

Sheryll Murray (United-Kingdom) highlights other constraints. Firstly, British women show little interest in the fishing sector and secondly, those women that do show an interest

cannot invest without their husbands' agreement. The third problem lies in the refusal of men's organisations to accept women. This refusal has caused women to look to improve their level of training before seeking to occupy positions of responsibility within organisations in the industry. In fact, training for women does not guarantee them a place within men's organisations.

3.4. Leadership issues

Another difficulty arose from the examples presented and discussed in Vasa: women's lack of experience in working together and in resolving any disputes that may arise. The presence of someone from outside the industry – someone who we could call the leader or the mediator – serves to structure the group. Cornelia Quist (Netherlands) explains that during the first year, women from the VinVis network worked together to improve their awareness, and above all to increase their self-confidence and to assume their new role. Within three years, they overcame their difficulties thanks to work carried out together, along with the person leading their network. A shared knowledge base was therefore created. Work carried out with regard to the European Commission's Green Paper enabled them to go deeper into gaining knowledge of the fishing sector. They have worked together over a period of several months in order to formulate shared proposals. The debate and the discussions that took place during this period were a truly educational experience, enabling them to better understand the Common Fisheries Policy, stock management, etc. The volunteer network leader carried out a considerable amount of work during this phase of the work.

II. COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

Through their associations – and occasionally on their own initiative – women have made their presence felt in the public sphere. Some of their initiatives solely relate to the fishing and aquaculture industry, while others have the wider remit of defending public services. Women play an important role in a number of fields – particularly in the social field. Randi Marie Nielsen (Norway) explains that the first women's organisation, *Damegruppen Havglimt*, founded in 1946, was aimed at improving fishermen's living conditions. This solidarity is the basis for creating help funds for fishermen who find themselves unable to work for health reasons. These funds were introduced by all Norwegian women's associations, and lasted until the Norwegian State took over in the 1970s.

Women also play a role in fields they hold dear, because their lives and their families dependent on them: safety at sea, therapy for injured people and also for their families, defence for small-scale fishing and for their communities.

1 - Safety at Sea

Three presentations tackled the subject of safety at sea. Lilian Carriou (France) sets out the reasons influencing women to take part on this issue. Faced with a high number of accidents at sea, something simply has to be done. Women have undertaken several initiatives to improve safety on board fishing vessels, working alongside others. They also act by talking to their husbands and partners in order to convince them to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs). For the time being, this strategy has yielded unsatisfactory results, with men continuing not to use the equipment available to them.

Norwegian women live the constant fear of an accident at sea. May-Britt Bratseth explains that the immediate consequence of this fear is that young women refuse to marry fishermen and leave the community. It is in this context that women's associations have started up training courses for safety at sea aimed at fishermen. The fact that these courses are free of charge, and that transport and subsistence's costs are provided has proved decisive and enabled the lessons to become more widespread. They have received positive results from these initiatives, also thanks to contributions made by people entering into the fishing industry after having worked for a number of years on oil rigs, and who have brought another perspective to issues of safety and health. For Norwegian women, safety at sea constitutes a guarantee for the future of the fishing industry.

The presentation of Patricia Paredes Soto (Spain) enables us to explore a whole other dimension to the issue of safety at sea. The wives of crew members on board of industrial fishing vessels have grouped together to request boat-owners to improve living conditions and safety at sea. Thanks to the campaign they have spearheaded at national level, rescue methods have been strengthened (with the purchase of two helicopters, four high-speed craft and two sea-going tugs).

For Joan O'Doherty (Ireland), accidents out at sea off the west coast of Ireland are generally caused by the consumption of alcohol, by the lack of suitable equipment and also

sometimes by seafarers' lack of experience. The west coast of Ireland has long been deprived of access to existing safety equipment, which is concentrated more on the east coast. The public authorities have since spent thirty million pounds on buying the necessary equipment.

2 - Psychological Support

This is a flagship initiative for French women's associations – particularly so in Brittany. This not only deals with safety, but also with helping accident victims and extending this assistance to the victim's family members. Two additional presentations were made – one by Sonia Bourhis, a fisherman's wife, and the other by Liliane Capobianco, a social worker in the fishing industry. These two presentations enabled them to bring two points of view to the issue and make a full account of the debate currently underway in France.

During the discussion, it appeared that in other European countries (Finland, Norway), support victims and injured people is provided by local units made up of people working in the social field within the community, as well as by women's organisations.

3 - Defence of small-scale fishing

For Gunda Nilsen, social work carried out by women in local communities has contributed to the development of the fishing activity and to community wellbeing. Women want to preserve a coastal culture and encourage young people to enter into the fishing industry. The fact that young Norwegians have a very poor image of fishing in fact threatens the whole industry.

Mariet Groen's presentation is not only a call for the defence of small-scale fishing, but also an alarm call for the survival of the Dutch shrimp-fishing fleet. The termination of an agreement by the Dutch public authorities between fishermen and distributors regarding the supply and the price of shrimp has escalated into a major crisis. Members of the VinVis women's network have come to the defence of their husbands and of the whole community.

Michèle Pendelièvre's presentation emphasises the problems faced by women's associations in discussing subjects linked to fishing management. The leadership of a varied group of women is a difficult task, and it is virtually impossible to broach subjects liable to create tensions. Women are unwittingly introducing fishing gears conflicts

experienced by their husbands and partners into discussions within the association. Sometimes, women have been able to have exchanges on fishing management, as can be seen by reading the report by C. Fraga MEP, who predicts a liberalisation of individual transferable quotas, or by reading the Green Paper. But as a general rule, this type of discussion is carefully avoided.

Similar signals are coming out of Norway, where women from the NFK say that they do not raise questions regarding stock management, in order to avoid conflicts. Local associations group together coastal fishermen's wives and trawlermen's wives, and discussions that become too heated throw these associations off balance.

The presentation of Siri Gerrard (Norway) reveals the struggles led by women in coastal regions in the north of the country. Women have become aware that the durability of the region depends on their ability to act in order to maintain hospitals, schools and all other infrastructure necessary for day-to-day life. Fishermen's wives have taken part in a much wider female action, thereby enabling them to connect with women from other industries and to become more integrated into society by taking up their studies once again and by following training courses.

The reports from the various speakers and the chaired discussion closing this workshop can take the credit for opening up the debate on the participation of women in the public sphere. We hope that this small insight will constitute a basis for further debate to be carried out on women's organisations and on their participation in collective action connected with the fishing and aquaculture industries. We invite the readers of this document to take good note of the different contributions in order to gain a full appreciation of the stakes, the difficulties and the future prospects for these fields ◆

I -

WHY JOINING TOGETHER?

I N T R O D U C T I O N

While mutual assistance between women in the fishing industry and marine farming has a long history, the creation of women's associations is a recent phenomenon in almost all European fishing countries. What are the reasons behind the constitution of women's organisations? What operational problems have they come up against? What kind of relationship do they maintain with traditional fishermen's organisations? The FEMMES workshop in Vasa addressed these issues.

The original situations vary widely among the countries and the regions. In one area, a woman in a financially difficult situation has the idea of forming an association to encourage professional training for women. In another area, a number of wives of fishermen who were the victims of accidents at sea decide to group to improve onboard working conditions. Elsewhere, individual women become aware that they share the same obligations to male rules, and fight for their independence. However the same questions keep cropping up, leading women's associations to widen their scope of action. This culminated in a greater interest in safety at sea, the recognition of work carried out by women, professional training, the promotion of fishing products, the preservation of stocks and the influence of political and economic instruments on fisheries management. The different associations are also facing the same problems of funding, cooperation or confrontation with men's organisations, a shortage of volunteers and difficulties in making themselves heard by the relevant politicians. The risk is that the hazards and the complexities of managing associations may divert attention from the objectives pursued by these women's organisations ◆

Defending women's place 1 -

Carmen Serrano-Soler
Aspiring fisherwoman
Member of TYRIUS association
Spain

On an island near Valencia, women are still totally subject to male dominance. Equality of inheritance of fishing rights between sisters and brothers is certainly enshrined in the law, but custom prevails and women who stand up for their rights are ostracized from the community.

In El Palmar, a small town of 850 people, mainly living off the fishing industry, located on an island on the Albufera lake near Valencia, tradition has the appearance of an unalterable law. Tradition separates women from any active formal participation in economic life, and particularly in the fishing industry: only boys can inherit fishing rights and pass them on to male children. Even so, a women's association has been formed in order to claim women's right to fish. This right has been recognised by the legal authorities in a decision of original jurisdiction in October 1998. In spite of this, people who have attempted to change tradition have been rejected by the fishing community of El Palmar because of their rebellion, and even today, the decision of 1998 has still not been applied.

According to tradition, only men can participate in the El Palmar fishing community. Girls are removed from any hereditary rights, and parents therefore hope that their daughters find a fisherman *fiancé* so that they can remain in the community. Marriages with people from elsewhere or with non-fisherman islanders are frowned upon.

In 1994, the Tyrius Association of Housewives tried to change the way the fishermen's community works. It organised training courses, cultural visits and trips in order to take women away from the state of submission. But conflict arose over the intention to eliminate discrimination over fishing rights. Following several attempts at dialogue and

conciliation, seeing that the situation was not going to change, the Tyrius women decided to bring the case before the courts. They won, in spite of all the obstacles put in place by the fishing community of El Palmar. These escalated to retaliatory measures against those respecting the legal decision, and isolated those who displayed a degree of sympathy for the cause defended by the association.

Women had the most hostile and unexpected reaction. In 1999, a small number of women split from the movement and founded an association aimed at fighting the Tyrius Association of Housewives. Through repenting and denouncing their former comrades, they benefited from community support and were able to integrate into the fishing community, all under the watchful gaze of the local authorities. Curiously, it was not just older women involved in this, but also young women doing the same thing as their parents did.

Women from the Tyrius association have been awarded various prizes and honours for their struggle. This is of great comfort, but doesn't change the hostility they are faced with from their neighbours, male and female alike, within the El Palmar community ♦

A*anne-Marie Esteban*
Skipper's wife
UHAINA Association,
Saint Jean de Luz, France

For Anne Marie Esteban, it is essential to pool energies in order to defend the interests of fishermen and their families. Women have to create links with men's organisations in order to get closer to the powers-that-be.

The "UHAINA" association is currently independent of any religious, political or union label. Like many associations in the Federation of women and fishers families "3FM", UHAINA came about through associations of women's and widows' groups from the Sea Mission which initiated international meetings with their Spanish counterparts in Galicia, Biscay and Andalusia.

Topics dealt with in UHAINA meetings:

1987: Creation of the "3FM" network, which is still running and welcoming new group members : Arcachon and Méditerranée. (in La Rochelle)

1989: Solidarity (La Guardia in Galicia):

1991: Safety at sea (Pasajes in Basque Country):

1993: Women – the hope of the seafaring world (Lourdes in France)

1995: Associations and assistance for training (Vigo in Galicia)

1997: Fisherman's family – from the boat to the home (Noirmoutier in France)

1999: what does the future hold for fishermen and their families? (Saint Jean de Luz in France)

2001: Application of new social laws (Malaga in Andalusia):

2003: Safety at sea (Les Sables d'Olonne in France)

The decision was taken in Noirmoutier in 1997 to formalise the existence of all the association member groups and to form a federation. The primary aims of these women's associations were to offer women a way out from their isolation, to train them, to provide them with information, and to enable young women, not from a maritime background, to discover all about the maritime world. They take part in social events and protests in their ports.

Our association groups wives of men working in artisanal fisheries sector, seafarers' wives on industrial fishing or in commerce, and who reject the separation of trades (*métiers*). They all recognise that working hours at sea are double those generally worked on land, and are carried out in unsafe and dangerous conditions, with a lack of sleep for both skipper and crew. The woman is the voice of the family in a society concerned with defending rights.

The following benefits came out of these meetings:

- Following the meeting in Pasajes in 1991, a delegation of Spanish and French fishermen's wives made a joint demand before the European Parliament and succeeded in getting helicopters and life rafts made available on the Spanish coast.
- After the meeting in Noirmoutier in 1997, a joint Franco-Spanish petition was put before the European Parliament in 1998, to the "Family, Childhood and Solidarity" commission.

The main points retained by the European deputies were as follows:

- The problems faced by the fishermen's families are those of single parent families. The maritime reality of fishing does not change: techniques may develop, but the social side of the fishing activity remains the same or even regresses.
- The importance of radio/telephone communications: prices need to be lowered
- Fishermen should be treated exactly the same as other workers. In spite of the complexity of the profession, there is no EU directive governing the activity, whereas in other sectors, social aspects are governed by Law.
- Women's groups need to remind the Parliament of its function: making and applying directives, guaranteeing protection in the international maze.
- It is essential to have links with fishermen's unions in order to accomplish social projects.

- Following the meeting in Strasbourg, we organised other meetings (Bilbao – Vigo – Barcelona) to draw up a European project. Associations for fishermen’s wives in Germany, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands joined us in this project.

Fisheries crisis

In 1993, we have created “Basque coast coordination” with a handful of other women, in order to provide emergency help for striking fishermen’s families facing the crisis (food packets, negotiations with EDF (*Electricité de France*) to maintain household electricity and gas connections, etc). Like everywhere else in France, fishermen involved us in their various demonstrations and events. This structure, created at the time, is still operational under the name of a “social commission” of the Local Fisheries Committee in which I still participate. More proof of recognition from men’s organisations is our presence in the “training commission” of the Local Fisheries Committee, and above all my place as an individual member with voting rights within the Aquitaine Regional Fisheries Committee. It must be said that we never tried to impose ourselves on the men nor have we tried to replace them. On the contrary, we make sure that we add to their initiatives and studies, lending them a woman’s point of view.

Creation and initiatives of the association

When we formalised the existence of our group of fishermen’s wives as an association – UHAINA – in St Jean de Luz in 1997, we benefited from the support of the Local Fisheries Committee, the Regional Fisheries Committee and other local/regional bodies.

It is important to note that the UHAINA association, with around thirty members, is firmly embedded into the local maritime scene: participating in tuna festivals (for the Ttoro, a Basque speciality), and sea festivals. Thanks to the bring-and-buy sales we have held, we have been able to raise enough money to organise a Christmas party for fishermen’s children. In 2002, we gave out 220 toys and served 450 children.

Recognition and difficulties

There are a number of obstacles to overcome for women to play a recognised role or to fulfil an administrative, marketing, financial audit, quality control or management role: a lack of development in people’s way of thinking, a lack of skills and above all a lack of training, which we have made a priority for action in this regard. In partnership with the

Ciboure maritime school, the UHAINA association introduced an “accountancy management” course for fishermen’s wives in 2001, funded by the Aquitaine Regional Council¹.

On a local level, the role of women in “men’s” organisations is far from widespread. There are two different attitudes: sectarian rejection, or paternalism, which is another way to keep us quiet. But as long as the fishing sector is in decline, it has to apply all possible energy and intelligence, and women are being included more and more.

Our association is recognised by others institutions. For example, by the Prefect of the *Pyrénées Atlantiques* region, who singled out UHAINA and ten other associations from the thousand associations in the region, because of its initiatives carried out in the public interest.

Our unity makes us strong

During a federal meeting of “3FM” in Arcachon in July 2000, we invited representatives from the other federation of fishermen’s wives, FIFEL, to join us. We had noticed that we were often knocking on the same national and European doors for the same reasons. Our division is a weakness. Recognising the complementarities of what we were doing, we decided to initially work together on cases of mutual interest – e.g.: training for fishermen’s wives leading to qualifications and the inclusion of women in professional maritime bodies. We have been working towards establishing connections between the two federations for several months now. This has led to an assembly creating our new federation in Lorient on 24th and 25th October 2003.

There are still a lot of battles to be fought alongside associations in other EU Member States.

- We have to promote the idea of the existence of rights within the collective consciousness
 - We need to find funding for fishermen’s wives organisations
 - We need to obtain recognition for training
 - We need to provide a shared approach throughout Europe in order to confront the issue of fishermen lost at sea, and to reduce the period necessary for granting compensation
 - We need women to be involved in fisheries
-

- We need to develop awareness of women's interests in the various parties and bodies working in the fishing industry.

It is important to stress the fact that all the work, carried out to date by women's associations or federations, is voluntary work, and therefore limited as regards time and resources. Subsidies granted by local authorities or others bodies cover the cost of our initiatives, but do not cover the cost of our day-to-day operation. This does not enable the creation of permanent jobs, either locally or at federal level, which would naturally be able to extend and deepen our initiatives and both our internal and external network communications, and to make them more effective ◆

Liliane Capobianco
Fisheries Social Worker
France

Corsican fisherwomen are now able to exchange between them and have access to training but they aren't ready to take any responsibilities within the association

Liliane Capobianco was the origin of Corsican Association for Fishermen's Wives foundation. She explained to us how this came about. She was contacted by a group of fishermen's wives in the Var, another Mediterranean region, who wanted to organise a meeting with the Corsican fishermen's wives. This meeting was aimed at discussing the legal status of spouse employee in the fishing industry.

She organised a meeting between thirteen women, who all came from the southern ports of Corsica (Ajaccio, Bonifacio, Propriano). The women dealt with their everyday problems during this meeting: family, work, the family budget, selling fish, etc. They decided not to become members of the Var Association of Fishermen's Wives, but rather to establish their own association. Following this, several informal meetings were organised giving women the opportunity to meet each other and talk about their experiences.

The Corsican Economic Development Agency offered to organise training courses for women, funded by the European PESCA fund. In association with the Regional Director for Maritime Affairs and the Director of the Maritime College in Bastia, Liliane introduced a training course aimed at women. This course was held between October 1998 and March 1999 at the Maritime College in Bastia for ten women from Upper Corsica, and in Ajaccio for ten women from Southern Corsica. In spite of operational problems and shortcomings, this course on enterprise management, accounting and marketing for catches has enabled women to familiarise themselves with computers and to play a role in enterprise management.

The association now operates very well in the city of Ajaccio, but women from elsewhere on the island appear less motivated. There is a group of six women in the town of Centuri. They rarely hold meetings, but do participate in the association's annual general meeting. It is worth pointing out that Centuri is four hours' drive away from Ajaccio.

Association members in Ajaccio appear happy to meet one another – they mainly come to relax and talk one afternoon every month. For them, these meetings are an opportunity to talk, plan meals or social gatherings. The meetings also represent an opportunity to claim a place alongside men within local decision-making bodies, in order that they may take part in the decision-making process regarding fishing, and also that they can develop their fish sales.

On the other hand, the association has difficulties in finding volunteers to take on responsibilities within the association. As a consequence, Liliane Capobianco and the treasurer are too often the only ones to take on the entire administrative work, such as filling out forms requesting subsidies from the regional authorities. The association has good relationship with local and regional fishermen's organisations, working alongside them on many issues. Liliane Capobianco soon hopes to find young women who are willing to take on the association's administrative duties ◆

***G*unnel Edman-Blom**
Executive of fisheries administration
Sweden

The income made from fishing is not enough to make a living for a family. Women can diversify their sources of income without getting out of the fishing sector, if only they receive consideration and credit.

Experience shows that fishermen on the Swedish island of Gotland have a cautious and conservative attitude to development and innovation in the industry. Fishermen are often “stuck” in a traditional mindset. This can be seen most clearly in the issues of safety, processing, and expanding the business to embrace other sources of income. Here, women (wives and partners) have greater scope for free thinking and breaking with established patterns.

In small-scale coastal fisheries, wives or partners often play an important role in the business, but one which is not always clearly defined. Studies have shown that married or cohabitating fishermen are “*more successful*” than those who are single. It is therefore important to protect and utilize the potential that exists in the fishing industry, for instance by involving women with direct or indirect ties to the industry, making use of their skills, and hence creating employment. It is important to open up the possibility of a female perspective on the fishing industry, which over time will improve the industry’s safety, profitability and status. Greater participation and cooperation in the various aspects of fisheries will also strengthen local solidarity in fishing communities.

Safety at sea

Fishing is one of the most dangerous jobs in existence. For this reason, promoting safety is of great importance and women and families can play a crucial role in doing so. Women often have a wider perspective on safety, encompassing the entire family. Women lack the traditional prejudices that fishermen often resort to, such as “*Lifejackets are for amateur fishermen*”, “*A lifejacket won’t save you in winter*”, “*It’s impossible to work with a safety line*” and so on. Women are often also excluded from the practical, sea-going side of fishing and hence lack insight into the situations faced by fishermen. Needless to say, insecurity and concern about possible dangers is greatest among those who are not present. In this case, women can assist in creating a safety mentality by undertaking investigations and study visits. Having gained an insight into safety issues, they can then seek to exert their influence directly and indirectly. The aim is to expand the safety mentality beyond compulsory safety-certification courses into the day-to-day work of fishermen. The examples to follow here are Tångruskorna, a group on the west coast of Sweden, and the Nordic fisherwomen’s group.

Development of alternatives activities

Fishermen often have a firm belief that, if you are a fisherman, you should go fishing and not involve yourself in other activities. Fishermen often lack the ability to survey their own situation and identify the opportunities that exist. Processing does not necessarily mean that you have to scale down your fishing activities, but it can create an opportunity for increasing your income, or maintaining your income while fishing less. Women have often turned out to be the driving force when it comes to processing. This is probably because in fishing, as in agriculture, the household economy is dependent on external income. Usually it is the women that are responsible for this income.

Fishing, especially small-scale coastal fishing is a seasonal occupation and therefore has to be supplemented with other sources of income. In addition to processing, product development and the development of fishing for new species, tourism should be part of the equation.

There is growing interest in adventure tourism, and there is great scope for women to be involved here. Tourists should be offered the chance not only to join a fishing trip, but to combine it with an exciting overnight stay in a boathouse or on board the fishing boat.

They could also be given help in cooking the fish they have caught themselves. The fishing industry has much to gain, in terms of increased income, better understanding of the trade, and increasing the attraction of fish.

If more women with ties to fishing get involved in the industry, this will create more scope for a female perspective on the fishing industry, which over time will improve the industry's safety, profitability and status. Greater participation and cooperation in the various aspects of fisheries will strengthen all those involved ◆

Monique Philip

President and Association Leader

Arcachon, France.

The association of fisher's women of Arcachon Basin initiated training, leading to qualifications and so enabling women to find work either in the fishing industry, or in other fields of activity.

Our association was founded in 1990, with the aim of helping fisheries sector men and of bringing different kinds of support to women. Following the crisis of 1994, small-scale fisheries were in a highly weakened state, and several boat-owners filed for bankruptcy. Women rallied together to defend the interests of their husbands and their families.

Sporadic actions were undertaken in order to raise awareness of the profession of fisherman, their working conditions and their family life. The association repeatedly tried to make the public authorities and the general public aware of the dangerous nature of the profession, and in particular the dangers associated with crossing the *deep entrance channels of the Arcachon Bassin*.

Arcachon City Council never viewed the promotion of capital and jobs in the maritime sector as a political priority. Around this time, women associations were set up in different French ports and contacts were made. In 1998, two federations of fisherwomen were created, with a single objective: the condition of women within society.

Training

Fisherwomen have to constantly adapt to different constraints in the profession and anticipate future developments. A shared request from various groups was therefore to

bring about a level of training, which would enable them to acquire valuable skills for sectors other than fishing, should they need to undergo rapid conversion

Following a meeting where a large number of associations were present, it was decided that a unified training programme would be established for the wives fishermen. The target audience was to be women from the maritime sector, with no age limit.

The programme's general objective is to enable women to acquire a certificate (or two) and to gain access to a job in the maritime industry, or indeed into any other field. Training is organised around three areas:

1. Creating and managing a company
2. Increasing knowledge of the maritime environment
3. Preparing the "Initial Business' Creation Certificate", which is essential for creating a fishing business

In Arcachon, women, most of them less than 35 years old, wanted to undertake paid, qualified training. It was decided that various National Education certificates would be aimed for:

- 1 - *Certificate of Technical Education "Accountancy" (BEP - brevet d'enseignement professionnel), maritime option*
- 2 - "Accountancy-Management" technical secondary school diploma
- 3 - "Managerial Assistant » Advanced Vocational Diploma (BTS - *brevet de technicien supérieur*)

We contacted the Aquitaine Region, which was seeking to respond to initiatives meeting obvious needs. Right from our initial request, the Region showed great interest in this innovative project, and helped to implement the programme. The person responsible for vocational training for the Aquitaine Regional Council is a woman. We believe that this was helpful to our talks and to their understanding of our request. Funding has been guaranteed in full by Aquitaine Regional Council.

With the participation of three training centres, the educational programme is underway. Training times will run according to normal school hours: Wednesdays² and school holidays are kept free to enable women to look after their children.

The first three months are given over to a refresher course in French, Maths, English and communications techniques. External speakers, a psychologist, the director of a bank, the manager of a management centre, a social and home economics assistant, etc. will speak per half-group. These three months enable some people to get back into the education rhythm, to respect the timetable imposed, to learn to take care of children at home differently. Absenteeism has gradually stopped, and only one woman dropped out from the course.

Six months of course-work, with a four-week training period working in a company completes the first year. The second year has nine months of course-work.

Sixteen women chose the BEP in Accountancy with Maritime Option; one went for the professional accountancy baccalaureate, and two did the BTS. The results were, as we hoped, eight women got their BEP – one of whom did so at the end of the first year; three women left on maternity leave and therefore did not sit their exam; four passed three quarters of the certificate and have to retake two or three tests next year.

The “maritime” module, followed by all these women, however, has never been fully recognised by fishermen, and I regret to say that the Transport Minister, in spite of all our attempts, has failed to find the resources to introduce this certificate for women.

Within the group of women who have undertaken this course, some wanted to go on and get their professional baccalaureate, and this would have opened up so many opportunities in their job search.

Funding for training courses is currently very low. The Aquitaine Regional Council, however, says more money could become available shortly.

² French children do not go to school on Wednesdays.

Training must obviously result in jobs, and the association has implemented an employment scheme for women, through help from various sources, including the European Union. But it is up to women themselves to take action throughout the year ♦

Pencha Raposo
Galician Fisheries Administration's
Spain

Shallow water fisherwomen from Galicia have killed two birds with one stone: in their fight for economic independence from their husbands, they won true professional and social recognition, going against the grain of Iberian traditions.

Pencha Raposo is the head of the training service of Department of Fisheries in Galicia. Thanks to its functions, it has contributed considerably to the organisation and recognition of the work of the women who collect shellfish, the *mariscadoras*. Within patriarchal societies, women are used to working in the shade of their husbands, and are consequently invisible, from a statistical point of view. This is why, in the fishing industry, women carry out many activities for which they receive no pay and no social security cover. As a consequence, they are economically dependent on their husbands all their lives.

Some women have decided to put an end to this situation: these are the Galician *mariscadoras*. Through organising and following training courses, they have realized the value of their work. They want to go further and fight for recognition of their work.

1. They have managed to gain a name for their profession. For many years, this activity, 90% of whose practitioners are female, had a masculine name – “*marisqueo*”. Thanks to their persistence, this name was put into the feminine case “*mariscadora*”.
2. The second stage in the process was to gain self-confidence. Training has enabled women to become true professionals and to have a decent income. These benefits have given them self-confidence.

3. Through earning a salary, *mariscadoras* get the right to have their own social rights, rather than being dependant on their husbands' rights. They pay social security contributions and are no longer legal beneficiaries.
4. *Mariscadoras* are organised in groups and join fishermen's organisations (*cofradías*), where they are entitled to their say, as they are elected on the same basis as men.
5. They go further, and group together in a regional federation – a self-governing body separate from men's organisations. For the time being, the federation of Galician *Mariscadoras* (AREAL) groups together half of the 5800 Galician *mariscadoras*. The federation's objectives are to promote products by having a label, improving prices and work conditions.
6. The *mariscadoras* also became independent of men. Their financial independence and newfound self-confidence have enabled them to take part in community life, to leave the house and even the village in order to go to meetings unaccompanied. These activities, which may seem trivial, are difficult to carry out in traditional, small communities without getting yourself accused of being revolutionary or immoral ♦

Yolande Allanic

Seafarer's wife

Member of the FETEM association

Besides being important for a collective action, commitment in associations like FETEM is a way of awareness for every women of the maritime world.

Yolande is a member of the FETEM association, which groups wives and partners of fishermen from various metiers, as well as of seafarers. Her husband was formerly crewman on a fishing vessel, but for health reasons, he is now seafarer. Her son has passed his mechanics diploma in a fishing college in Etel, and now works onboard a container ship.

FETEM, a member of the 2FM federation, claims for durability of the fishing activity, safety at sea, and for a psychological support to families in case of events at sea. Yolande is the vice-president of the association, and training for women is her main concern.

Through her membership of the FETEM association, Yolande had the opportunity to exchange with other women experiencing the same situation, and with politicians ◆

DISCUSSION



The fight of El Palmar women for the right to fish

Gunda Nilsen, Norway:

“The issue raised by Carmen is shocking – above all in today’s Europe. We might be able to support these women’s fight by organising our next meeting in their area.”

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

“In today’s Europe, where unity and equality between men and women are so important, it is shameful to see this happening. This situation must be condemned by the FEMMES network.”

Carmen Serrano-Soler, Spain:

“The judgments are long and the rulings are not being applied. Socially, the consequences are dreadful. Everything is being done to prevent women’s participation in the community. It is difficult to carry on the fight. Some women who fought and gained a judgment in their favour have “repented” in order to return to the community, because the situation was untenable. We are tired of all this – everybody ignores us.”

Michèle Pendelièvre, France:

“Would it be possible to carry out an initiative in order to help these women in their struggle? We could inundate the relevant political authorities with a letter-writing campaign, for example.”

Begoña Marugan Pintos, Spain:

“I propose that we write a letter to the Spanish Justice Minister on behalf of the women of Albajera, who are fighting for the right to inherit fishing rights. Women are asking to respect the law. A letter could be drawn up and signed by all the associations. We have to raise this issue in our reports – particularly in the AKTEA bulletin.”

Carmen Serrano-Soler, Spain:

“Action carried out at local political level is pointless – the politicians are involved in the community, and many of them are fishermen. They stand in the way of everything. The mayor supported the women trying to get their rights recognised, but that merely served to strengthen the hate directed towards us. However, we may be able to act in Valencia.”

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

“When a whole population fights against its womenfolk, it fights against itself” ◆

2 -

Political weight

Françoise-Edmonde Morin

Boat owner fisherman's wife

*AFLBN – Women's Association of the Lower
Normandy Coast,
France*

French associations for fisherwomen have been meeting from 1992 onwards, in order to provide visibility to women and to develop their social status. They are now asking themselves how to carry on their work without becoming snowed under by administrative tasks.

Since 1945, French women have stopped going out on fishing vessels, little by little. Maritime Affairs' Administration has been a core actor for their exclusion, through the absolute priority given to men and the strict application of the law on crews working on board ship, which banned women. Their activities are consequently mainly on land. But as these activities were previously performed collectively, they are now done in isolation, and most women gain no direct benefit from their activity – financially, or in terms of their self-determination and social recognition.

The beginnings of the grouping together

After the French fishing crisis of the 1990s, it became obvious to women that they needed to group together. With the crisis passed, no body was willing to receive women into its ranks. Then the Maritime Social Action and Study Centre (CEASM), a small association body for advising and consultancies played an important role in the grouping of women's associations. Before anybody else, its directors realised that women were an underused resource in the maritime world, and that the question of their role may help to raise funds for them. The gaining, management and use of European funds were theirs, and the federation found itself to be both protected and nurtured. One positive outcome of CEASM's involvement was to stir the women to think of potential sources of funding such as government ministries, regional authorities and European institutions.

In 1996, in the framework of the preparation of the Fishing Law, the CEASM organised a working group including six associations to discuss the social status of women involved in fishing and aquaculture sectors. Thanks to some persistent lobbying, the united associations took part in the drafting of the 1997 Fishing Law: women gained a social status, along with the right to make contributions to the same retirement and pension fund as the seafarers, the ENIM³.

The work on the 1997 Fishing Law is directly connected to the creation of federations: preparatory meetings were held to draw up a charter and statutes to gather the various associations on common bases. Finally, two federations arose from the constituent meeting in May 1998 : the Inter-regional Coastal Women's Federation (FIFEL) and the 3FM. FIFEL gathers together four fishing associations located on the English Channel and Atlantic coasts (Brittany and Normandy) and on the Mediterranean (Hérault and Corsica), along with three shellfish farming associations (Thau, Charentes Maritimes, Bassin d'Arcachon). Since 1992, they set out the idea that women are the most effective way to apply the social aspect and general modernisation of the sector. In 2001, a combined project with the CEASM resulted in the publication of a "Handbook" which highlighted women's tasks and skills within fishing and shellfish family enterprises.

The question of funding

Upon its creation in 1998, FIFEL did not receive any subsidies. But in 1999, three ministries in charge of gender and/or Fisheries concerns provided a €4573 funding for the federation. By 2003, the Federation has benefited €18 500. This funding is nevertheless a problem for the Federation: it has to be used to fund studies. But the federation would like the funds to be restricted to the sole management and development of the federation. The federation's operation calls upon the energies of volunteers, with lots of constraints: dispersal of members over hundreds of kilometres, the isolation of ports and difficulty in mobilising women busy with the workload of their daily lives. Women would like to get funding for telephone costs, meetings, conferences, travels, to gather the women and associations of the federation, and to possibly fund a permanent employee to distribute internal and external information.

³ See AKTEA n°2.

The Ministries request that funding is sought region by region. The development of a federation may bring about the funding of permanent positions for each coast through the use of regional funds ◆

Sonja Hellen Sele

Wife of a skipper

Norway

The Norwegian fishing sector is in decline. Reversing the tendency requires, among other things, that women get involved in fishing activities: aquaculture, transformation, environmental management, etc. The law still has to let widows of boat-owners use the vessel...

“My name is Sonja Hellen Sele, and I was born and raised on a small island in the district of Bømlo, Western Norway. I am married to a fisherman, and we have four children aged between four and eleven. I have a vocational qualification in aquaculture but I am currently at home looking after the children. I have had a lively interest in fisheries ever since I was a little girl.

We would gladly believe that the Norwegian fishing industry is thriving, but unfortunately, the very opposite is true. There is little optimism in the industry, and if fishing was not already a low-status occupation, it is well on the way to becoming one. So now we are relying on our fishermen to keep their heads high, look for new opportunities and remain confident about the future. The fortunes of the industry have fluctuated greatly in the past, so we shall probably survive.

Raising the status of fishing requires a determined effort. For instance, obtaining vocational qualifications in fisheries-related subjects, or collaborations between training centres and the industry to recruit students and provide them with work placements at shore-based businesses and on board fishing vessels, are a good way to make young people aware of the opportunities open to them in the fishing industry. This will assist in raising the industry’s status.

Fisherwomen have always been concerned with raising the profile of women in the fishing industry. To this end they have set up the organisation “FINKO” (*Fiskerinæringens Kvinneutvalg*, Women’s Committee of the Fishing Industry). In the past, the organisation received an operating subsidy from the state, but in the future this support is to be heavily curtailed, affecting most of the initiatives that have yielded good results until now. In this connection I would particularly like to emphasize the information drive aimed at women wanting to learn about the fishing industry. If the “women’s training classes” disappear, in the long run this is likely to mean fewer girls entering the fishing industry. Fortunately some of the regional authorities in Norway have recognized the value of this work and have provided funding from regional business-development programmes to allow the classes to continue in their own region. We in Norges Fiskarkvinnelag (the Norwegian Fisherwomen’s Association) welcome this move.

We are a great asset to society. We easily get involved in matters ranging from major environmental disasters to little things such as what to cook for dinner today. We dare to speak out and exert influence where we can, but are we involved where the big decisions are taken? If so, that must mean in the kitchen.

We are perhaps a little too modest. We are strongly committed while we are pursuing an issue, but once it is resolved, we are satisfied and content. The last thing we think of is promoting ourselves instead of the issue. This is probably the reason why our efforts are still not fully recognized: because we are not good enough at focusing attention on ourselves and on the fact that our values are equally important in society as those of men.

The Norwegian Fisherwomen’s Association has been involved in many issues over the years, including legal issues. The Ministry of Fisheries is currently consulting on a proposal that the widows of fishing-boat owners should have the right to retain undivided possession of their husband’s estate for as long as they wish. We fully support this move. At present, a widow has to sell the boat if she does not wish to enter the fishing business herself, which we do not believe is fair. A fisherman’s widow must be given the right to own a vessel for as long as she wishes without having to take up fishing herself. We hope the law will be changed in line with our wishes.” ◆

Brid Duff Duncan
Mna Na Mara
Ireland

Originally begun on an informal basis as the communications with fishing boats were inexistent, fishermen wives formed a communication circle where information on vessels and crews fishing around the coasts was received and passed. This formally came to the creation of the national association Mna Na Mara.

Brid Duff Duncan is a new member of Mna Na Mara. She works for an Irish PO, and her husband is a fisherman. Until the early 70's, communications between the boats and the mainland were not great and very often personal contacts within the ports were the only way of passing necessary information, parts needed services etc... for the boats.

These local informal groups began to tackle what were in the beginning, local issues e.g. harbour facilities, safety issues, rescue service, etc. Then larger issues were pointed out by women of the association, e.g. postal votes for fishermen, social welfare payment, Taxation. Conservation issues, however, required a more national approach.

There is a greater than ever need for information and education with regard to fishery matters from both National and EU level. This informal network was the foundation of the group which has become Mna na Mara.

The national structure has adopted an action plan, with the objectives of strengthening and widening the membership, fund-raising, and strengthening the partnership links with other women organisations, voluntary groups, local/regional/national NGOs or Networks both in Ireland and within the EU ♦

Cornelie Quist

*Rural sociologist and advisor to the VinVis network
Netherlands*

Twelve fishermen's wives four years ago launched an informal network that actively defended the fishing community during the recent crises. Fortified by their new visibility and competences, they change fishermen mentalities.

VinVis, the women in fisheries network of the Netherlands, is an autonomous organisation and open to all women, who are concerned about the future of the Dutch fisheries and its community, and who feel that women's role in fisheries should be recognized and validated. In practice the participants are all wives of fishermen. The VinVis network is run by the women, all on a voluntary basis.

In our network there are wives of boat owners and wives of crew from all important fishery regions of our country, representing all the different sectors fishing in Dutch waters, both sea and inland. These women are involved in a range of activities in the family fishing enterprise, such as administration, responding to crew concerns, contacting and dealing with banks, insurance companies, auctions, etc., cleaning, supplying groceries, and more. Some of the women are co-owners of the fishing enterprise, together with their husbands. These women sometimes join the crew on fishing trips. Some others women also have part-time jobs, mostly in shops or in administrative work or in the child care or care of the sick. The average age is early thirties and all of them are married and have children. Some of the women come from fishing families, while others have married into fishing families.

Last June 2003, the VinVis' network completed its third year of existence. The network is still an informal organisation, as we need time to find a common orientation, build relationships and win the confidence of the community. Although in the process women have joined and left our network, the VinVis' network has presently a stable core of twelve

women. Together we have gone through an impressive process of growth and I am happy to share our experiences with you and tell you about the challenges we met, about what we gained and what barriers we still have to overcome.

How the process started

In the Netherlands women (“wives”) of fishing families are not organised in formal fisherwomen’s organisations, neither are they members of the formal fishermen’s organisations. In 1994, three fisherwomen and I made a first attempt to form a fisherwomen’s organisation. I was working with an international NGO in fisheries and in this position I had visited fisherwomen’s groups in France and Spain and seen what an important role these groups played in the community. At a meeting of the Dutch Fishermen’s Association, one of the two national fishermen’s organisations of the Netherlands, I noticed only one woman participant. I approached her and we discussed the problem of the absence of women’s participation in the Dutch fishermen’s organisations. In contrast, women of farming communities in the Netherlands have been organised since the 1980’s. We decided to sound out women of fishing communities and fishermen’s organisation on their ideas about organizing women in fisheries. We met with primarily negative responses and we realized that the time was not ripe yet...

Five years later, a new opportunity appeared. In April of the year 2000 a symposium was held about the needs and aspirations of wives of fishermen in the Netherlands. Here the results of a survey made by the research department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries were presented. It was revealed that a large majority of the fishermen’s wives were involved in fishery activities themselves and that fisheries and family enterprise gave an important meaning to their lives. Nevertheless, their role was still an informal one and women were not participating in the formal fishery organisations. It was felt that this was the reason for the preservation of the traditional gender relations in the fisheries and the continuing weak social position of the wives of Dutch fishermen.

The attendance at the symposium by women of the fishing community was good and the discussions following the presentation of the survey results were very lively. The discussion focused on the question, “*Why women do not participate in the fishermen’s organisations?*” One mentioned reason was a practical one: women were just not invited to meetings. The reason, that fishermen’s organisations base their membership on boat-

ownership, had led to a situation where only men were invited, presuming that they were the sole owners of the fishing boats. However, the major reason put forward by the women was that the fishermen's organisations are a real bulwark of the male gender, where they feel out of place. Women put forward that their husbands did not like them participating in meetings of the fishermen's organisation, because the men were afraid that their wives would say things that would embarrass them in front of the other men. The men were also afraid of gossip about their wives moving in a man's world. Generally speaking, it appeared from the discussions that for the women of the older generation and the more conservative (protestant) cultures, this separation of a man's and a woman's world was more accepted than with the younger generation.

The symposium concluded with the suggestion to form a separate women's organisation within the national fisherman's organisations: a kind of woman's branch. However, this did not find sufficient support, because the women were afraid that they might not be taken seriously by the men in this manner. In the end it was agreed to start an informal network to explore possibilities and strategies and a group of women volunteered to be contact people for such a network. I was one of them.

The beginning of the network

On the 22nd of June of the year 2000, we had our first meeting at the fish auction of Urk, the most important fishing village of the Netherlands. After this meeting many more meetings followed.

The first year of the network's existence was rather turbulent. We were just a couple of women with a background in fisheries, but with many different views and ideas about how to give shape to our network. At the same time, we had to fight responses of cynicism and paternalism, in particular from the fishing community itself. Our biggest problems were our insufficient skills, knowledge and insights. There was also the problem of self-image for the fisher women, who felt caught in between traditional expectations and modern aspirations. This is why, in the beginning, I played an important role as a facilitator and as an adviser. I already had much experience working with women in fisheries, because of my affiliation with the ICSF, an international NGO working on issues that concern fisher communities the world over. Now three years later, women of our network had the opportunity to acquire knowledge and insights about fisheries issues and to develop skills

in the field of organisation, participation in public meetings, network building and dealing with the media, politicians and policy makers.

The *VinVis* network held its meetings approximately every three months. It is difficult to meet more often, because of the distances between the fishing villages where the women live and also because of time constraints. In between meetings, the network communicates through email and telephone. Initially the meetings were organised at fish auctions in different fishing harbours. The women felt the auctions to be woman friendly ground, because it is the woman who usually contacts the auctions and they know the people of the management and vice versa. Fish auctions are also one of the few places in Dutch fisheries, where women work in the management. Another reason why we preferred to meet at the fish auction is that we considered these to be neutral places.

Even though the Dutch fisher community is relatively small and homogenous in technology, it is a deeply divided sector. It is divided by regional and cultural differences, but more importantly, the sector is divided by two rival national fishermen's organisations. The women, who are in our network and whose husbands belong to these rival organisations, did not want to become part of this conflict. But of late, we have held our meetings, in turn, at the offices of the two national fisher (men) organisations. The reason for this is that the women feel that the network should work in close co-operation with the fishermen's organisations which are still the main representatives of the Dutch fisher community.

Finding a common direction

The most important and perhaps also the most difficult task, was to find a common direction. This was not only important for the justification of the network's existence, but also to create a stable foundation from which to start building. There are a few important events that helped the *VinVis* network find its orientation and direction.

Women as advocates of the Dutch fisher community

These were the events related to crises situations in Dutch fisheries: the cod fishery-crisis of 2001 and the shrimp fishery-crisis of 2003. Both crises were the result of policy decisions which caused a direct threat to the livelihood of the Dutch fisher communities.

In February 2001, the Dutch cod and plaice fishing community was disproportionately affected by the decision of the European Union to close large parts of the fishing grounds in the North Sea to protect the codfish from depletion. Government and public opinion was strongly influenced by the environmental lobby and there was little sympathy for the plight of the Dutch fishermen. In January 2003, the Dutch shrimp fishing community was disproportionately affected by the decision of the Anti-cartel Authority of the Netherlands to penalize the shrimp sector for its participation in a trilateral agreement with the Danish and German shrimp sector and the deal they had made with two trading companies about quantity of supply and minimum price.

In response, women of the *VinVis* network sent letters to our national government and the European Commission, they approached members of parliament, both national and European, and they met with the press. They explained about the negative effects of the policy decisions for the fisher families. *VinVis* women also spoke at fishermen's protest meeting, where they called for unity and persistence. Their actions were well appreciated by the Dutch fisher community which suffered from internal divisions and a poor public image.

In November 2001, a symposium was held with the title "*What is your opinion about the future of the Dutch cutter-fishery*". This symposium was unique for various reasons. Firstly, this event was organised conjointly by the two rival Dutch fishermen's organisations. Secondly, it was organised in a very participatory manner. Normally, only fishermen would participate in such meetings, but at the request of *VinVis*, the wives of fishermen were also invited. Both men and women of the fisher community had responded in large number to this invitation. Discussions were very constructive and it was clear that there was a broadly felt need in the community to reflect about the future. Both men and women expressed a clear concern about social and environmental issues and expressed their willingness to work for a fishery with a future. For the first time, wives of fishermen were publicly recognized as partner in fisheries discussions and they could give their vote independent of their husbands.

Another important event that helped the *VinVis* network to find its direction was the launching of the so-called Green Paper by the European Union to review its Common Fishery Policy (2001-2002). The *VinVis* network studied and discussed the Green Paper

and formulated its own response. The *VinVis* network put forward that the fishery management problem is not to be solved by the sole virtue of technical measures. This can only happen with the genuine support and participation of the fisher community, including women. They advocated a shifting of focus from the fishing boat to the people behind the fishing boat. “*Behind every fishing boat, there is a family and a community*”.

The *VinVis* network distributed its response widely and women of the network participated in various public discussions on fishery management and the European CFP and its consequences for the Dutch fisheries. Through the ICSF, the *VinVis* network was introduced to other fisherwomen’s organisations in Europe. On the 20th of November 2001, they collectively presented a list of issues of concern for women in European fisheries to the European parliament. This was a unique event.

Women’s role in fisheries should be recognized and validated

The relationship of the *VinVis* network and the national fishermen’s organisations did not, at first, develop in a very smooth way. Particular in the beginning, the leaders tried to patronize the network and push the women into a role they had decided for them. But today relationships are much improved after the *VinVis* network has had several open discussions with the leadership of these organisations. The fishermen’s organisations became more aware of the important role women play in communication with the community. As a result, women were invited more frequently to meetings and given information. *VinVis* also got a special niche on the websites of the fishermen’s organisations.

The new visibility of wives of fishermen, brought about by the *VinVis* network, was the reason why women of the network were approached by the media. Because of inexperience, we had decided to give our first interview to the national fisheries paper. An article in this paper, which is found on the table of every fisher household, was felt to be an opportunity to explain our mission to the community. When we asked to see the draft article, we were alarmed to read the woman-stereotype jargon in the article. Fortunately the journalist was cooperative and after about three or four revisions (!), we finally felt it could be published. While the journalist of the fisheries paper had seen women of fisher households as plain housewives, other media only showed an interested in hearing about women who go fishing out at sea. This meeting with the media, led to an animated

discussion among ourselves about the kind of role and image of women of fisher households, that we wanted to show to the public.

The EU Conference on the Role of Women in Fisheries, held in January, 2003, gave another important impetus to the *VinVis* network. In preparation we had two discussion meetings and a lot of email communication. In this way we formulated a statement of our concerns, and the statement was presented by some of the women of the network to the Conference. This time the statement included issues that concerned the recognition and validation of woman's role in fisheries. This Conference and the attention given by the Commission to the role of women in fisheries, gave great encouragement to the women of the *VinVis* network.

Empowerment of women

Thanks to the activities of *VinVis* fisher women are more and more mentioned in reports and documents as a group that deserves to be heard too. And more and more women from the fisher-community also speak up.

In the process of exploring women's role in fisheries, the women of the *VinVis* network became more aware of the value of their contribution, but also about their potential. The women of the *VinVis* network took up a role, which was new for the community. They began participating in public meetings on issues, which affect the future of Dutch fisheries. In these meetings, they met with officials of various Ministries, with environmental activists and with other stakeholders using coastal resources. They were confronted with the different ideas and perspectives. Quite often the women of the *VinVis* network were the only spokespersons from their community at these meetings. As long as the women went as a group, they felt encouraged. In this way opportunities were created for issues important to their community to become part of the social political dialogue and for the women to broaden their own perspective.

Women of the *VinVis* network have been recognised as advocates of the fisher community and this recognition has strengthened their self-confidence. The women feel encouraged to read and educate themselves.

The women of the *VinVis* network even now feel less inhibited to raise issues that are controversial but that need to be addressed for the sake of the future of the community, such as the relationship between boat-owners and crew, (un)sustainable fishing practices and internal divisions within the community. They also feel less reluctant now to publicly confront men of their community who tend to stereotype women and they can even expect the support of other men in this.

The *VinVis* network has proved to be an important base on which women of fisher communities have been given the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and insights. Crucial for its existence has been the finding of a common orientation and the opportunity to set its own agenda and priorities. And next to this is the importance of nurturing the relationships of mutual support and friendships in the network. The *VinVis* network could not have survived without the willingness of the women to share experiences and knowledge, to call on each other for advice and support, to respect each other's differences and to be open for a cry and a laugh.

Barriers still to overcome

The Dutch fisher communities are still very conservative in their perceptions about the role and position of women. This causes women to feel reluctant to join the *VinVis* network, even though they approve of our mission. The women who are in our network feel that they can participate because of the active support of their husbands and also of their parents and of their in-laws.

Although we receive the support of both national fishermen's organisations and some of the leaders in particular, the women of *VinVis* network still meet with leaders who want to patronise them. It should be said that this is not only the experience of the women, but also of young fishermen who want to discuss policy matters in the organisation.

The present (global) developments in fisheries, the fast changes and the problems of fisheries' management, are very difficult for the fisher community to comprehend. One of the most difficult barriers for the women of the *VinVis* network is the pessimistic future perspective that dominates the fisher community. This pessimism has resulted in an attitude of apathy and negative thinking. It also has led to tense relationships among fishermen and indifference for the plight of those who do not succeed to survive.

Acquiring knowledge and insights remains a problem, as information about fisheries issues is difficult to access (where to find, how to read, how to select, how to interpret, etc.).

Because we decided to function as an informal network, the *VinVis* network has no funds or institutional resources. We depend on each one's personal capacity to contribute and we depend on the institutional resources of other organisations. This has created limitations, but has also created the opportunity for network building and the active participation of all of us, as we can not depend on professional staff. At the moment, we are discussing the possibility of organising the *VinVis* network into a formal association. But we know that we first need to decide on a programme. Because of differences in perceptions, attitudes and experiences, there are sometimes miscommunications in the network. We therefore feel that with a small organisation, it is easier to build open and transparent relationships, where friendship and mutual respect are the most important ◆

Annie Rouquette
Shellfish farmer
Etang de Thau, France

Annie Rouquette is a shellfish farmer in Thau Basin in the south of France. She tells us why women from this area are coming together to defend the environment classification of the Basin.

Annie Rouquette breeds shellfish in the Thau Basin, in the south of France. The Thau pond is the biggest Mediterranean pond, with a surface area of 7500 hectares, an average depth of 5 metres and a maximum depth of 11 metres. Water circulates through two canals which connect the pond to the sea, and that makes the Thau pond the ideal spot for raising shellfish. 750 companies produce approximately 3,000 tonnes of mussels and 12,000 tonnes of oysters⁴.

Shellfish-farming in the Thau Basin is often combined with small-scale fishing activities, to increase people's income. Around 64% of shellfish breeders are small, family companies, and only 7% of the companies' heads are women. Since 1998, a quality procedure has been carried out, seeking to attain an AOC label (*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* – Certified Origine's appellation) to guarantee the origin and traceability of the products: the "Bouzigues" oysters.

Women in the Thau Basin

As in all other shellfish-breeding regions, a great many women from the Thau Basin participate in their husbands' work. They have a lot of tasks to perform, giving them very full working days. For some years now, some of these women have become members of professional bodies, and have taken part in producing the newspaper of the profession: "Mare Nostrum".

⁴ Approximately 10% of the national oyster production.

Women's actions

- They have defended their place of work by becoming members of an Environmental Commission.
- They have given educational tours for schoolchildren and tourists.
- They have contributed to reviews of the spouse's legal status.
- They have supported progress towards obtaining AOC certification.
- They have taken part in the promotion of shellfish.

Seven women from the fishing and shellfish farming industries formed an association at the beginning of 2002. Their concern was to contact other women and to make an inventory of their needs in term of information and training. They naturally called on the CIVAM (*Centre d'Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et le Milieu rural* - Help Centre for Promoting Agriculture and Rural Affairs) in the Thau Basin to assist them.

The CIVAM of Thau Basin

The CIVAM is an association aiming at assisting farmers and rural workers to develop collective projects. The CIVAM grouped shellfish farmers and fishing communities of the area on a project concerned with the promotion of shellfish produced in the Thau Basin. It launched the request for AOC recognition, to be appropriated by professionals themselves in 2001.

Shellfish farming and fishing are in danger

On 3rd July 2003, the Prefect for the Languedoc-Roussillon region announced the downgrading of the quality of the Thau water from category A to category B, justified by the deterioration in the quality of the water. This announcement mystified everybody concerned. Tired of new standards and excessive media coverage, shellfish-breeders expressed their concerns about jobs, food safety and the preservation of this area of exceptional natural beauty. A meeting with the Prefect has since brought about the opening of an inquiry, the final decision to be made on 15th October 2003.

The water of Thau has been classified as category A since 1995, thereby guaranteeing a healthy environment from where it was possible to harvest shellfish and sell them directly. The classification in B category requires the shellfish to be cleaned before going on sale. This can be achieved by immersing it in an area classified as A or in a purification basin.

Being downgraded to category B implicitly means that a deterioration of water quality has been noted and accepted.

The method of calculation of the quality of water in France is based on the microbiological tests made by French Research Institute for the Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER). From these results, the sites are classified in category A, B or C. In the case of Thau, the method has been disputed by both professionals and by the Prefect. Therefore, two second opinions were requested from independent laboratories.

Even though the quality of the environment was obviously improving (eg: previously disappeared clams and sea horses reappeared; sea urchins and snails were abundant, plant life was increasing), the downgrading to zone B of the basin of Thau was an open door to anything that might drift in. On an environmental level, this downgrading would lead to a worsening of the pollution in the water, the destruction of all the environmental initiatives implemented in the Basin. (Coastal Planning Scheme and others)

On “food safety” level, the route through to category B would not resolve any problems caused by viruses or toxic algae⁵. The “A” classification constitutes the best guarantee for consumer safety.

Women's Project

The women involved in the shellfish farmer’s organisation were working individually on different themes: the recognition of their legal status and their role in men organisations. They wished to discuss these issues with other women, and in 2002 the CIVAM made use of the EU "Equal" financial programme to develop the exchanges on these issues. To date, the first phase of this programme, which consists of an inventory of the female side of the profession, has been carried out: interviews have been held with a sample of 56 women working in different companies in the Thau Basin. There are three main results:

- The women are worried about the consequences of the increase of tourism and urbanization on the quality of the environment. They are afraid that the pond could be classified in zone B, which would bring about the disappearance of many small businesses,
- The status of women and their professional recognition remain a constant concern,
- The women desire to improve both communication with men shellfish farmers and also their image to the outside world ◆

⁵ The only solution to solve this problem being to keep the production areas exempt from viruses.

DISCUSSION



Women's fishing rights

José Pascual, Spain:

“What are the problems faced by the widows of boat-owning fishermen in Norway?”

Sonja Hellen Sele, Norway:

“A widow does not inherit the fishing rights (quotas) that her husband held. She just inherits the boat, but is prevented from selling it off quickly because she has to have fished for three years in order to own fishing quotas. This law being opposed is currently being studied.”

José Pascual, Spain:

“In Spain, anybody can be a boat-owner – fishing rights are linked with the boat and not with the owner.”

Sonja Hellen Sele, Norway:

“In Norway, the fisherman must at least have a 50% share in the boat in order to take it out to sea.”

Begoña Marugan Pintos, Spain:

“Fisherwomen must be trained if they are to be considered to be professionals.”

Katia Frangoudes, France:

“Women are succeeding in entering all fields. How can we capitalise on these actions in order to reach decisions? Fishermen's wives, thanks to their association, have benefited from training in accountancy, company management, etc. These women have been awarded qualifications. But this does not grant them access to another profession outside

the family business. Training for women is valid if it leads to a recognised qualification outside their own businesses, on the general job market. How can we capitalise on our varied actions?” ◆

3 -

Management constraints

***I**sabel Pérez Fernández*

*President of Mariscadoras organisation of Cambados
Spain*

Galicia mariscadoras obtain a professional status and the possibility to voice to resources after a hard fight.

The Cofradia San Antonio in Cambados was one of the last cofradias to manage shellfish production and set up a women association as 99% of shellfish gathers are women.

At the beginning, the situation was as follows:

- Lack of shellfish stocks' management: the quotas on harvesting were not being respected, and no controls were made.
- Significant shortcomings in sales strategies: everybody was selling exactly as they wished, often through an illegal network of buyers laying down their own rules.
- Poaching, often carried out by some fisherwomen, was seemingly uncontrollable.
- We did not have our own say on decisions taken in our profession: fishing licenses were granted without consulting us, and we played no role in drawing up exploitation plans.

All this resulted in very low income, for a work that grows ever harder. We have had to fight to change all this, in spite of pressure exerted by parties benefiting from this lack of organisation.

The current situation can be summarised as follows:

Shellfish harvesting is getting closer and closer to aquaculture: part of our income is set aside for purchasing spats, and the farming areas are carefully prepared. Catch quotas and minimum sizes are being respected.

Improvements in sales strategies, almost all sales are now made at auction and poaching is limited. All fisherwomen pass their production through a checkpoint before to bring it to the action.

At the same time we better manage our activity by creating fishing licenses and by giving our position concerning resource management plans. ♦

Nicki Holmyard
Mussel farmer
Scotland

Shellfish women constituted an informal group within shellfish industry dominated by men. Women would like to go further but they do not dare to do it.

My name is Nicki Holmyard and I am a mussel farmer. I also undertake part-time work for our trade association, and promote the farms, products and the people involved in the wider Scottish shellfish industry. That industry comprises growers of mussels, scallops and oysters.

Compared to the shellfish industry in Europe, our own industry is very new, having started around 30 years ago. Because of this, it still operates on a relatively small scale. In fact, the production base has only risen from a few tonnes of mussels to around 3 500 tonnes per year, from a few thousand oysters to well over 3 million Pacifics and 200 000 Natives per year, and from a handful of scallops, to 19 tonnes of Queen Scallops and 39 tonnes of King scallops.

Such slowness to develop is in part due to the way in which the industry was originally “sold” or portrayed, as a complementary activity to crofting -which is small scale farming- and in part due to the lack of trust by finance institutions, in an industry in which they could see no rosy or stable future. Lack of financial investment was a serious drawback in the early days and there were few quality jobs available.

Despite its years of mixed fortunes, indications are that shellfish farming in Scotland is poised to make it into the big time. We have developed specific equipment and techniques to cope with local growing conditions, developed value added products and sought markets for those products. Even banks are beginning to show trust in the industry. However, for it

to make the leap into big business, much work will have to be put in to develop the markets ahead of production.

So, that is our industry but where do women fit into it? We now have women farmers, women involved with the selling, marketing, financial affairs and administration, women on the processing and quality control side, and women in support roles as mothers, homemakers, sympathy givers, good listeners and shoulders on which to lean. These latter roles may or may not be recognised as such by the industry, because as in many other situations, women are always under pressure, whether real or implied, to do 'real' work.

It is interesting to note that there are still very few women in top positions in our industry. As a 50% partner in our own shellfish company, I am in a privileged position in being able to have a major say in both the day to day operations and in strategic planning.

However, whereas I see my role on an equal footing to that of my partner, because he works on the farm at sea all day, and I work from an office at home, all the homemaking, housework and mothering tasks fall on my shoulders. I know that I am not alone in this, and it is a topic that is discussed regularly amongst my female industry colleagues.

We may go off regularly for the weekend to sell or promote our products at farmers markets or fairs in Scotland, England or further afield, but we have sorted out what happens to the children before we go, and we have left the fridge stocked! When men go off either for work or pleasure, do we even know where they are? The majority can pack a bag and slip off. But that is because we make it that way for them.

Perhaps I am generalising too far here, but I have found that this situation is the same for all my female colleagues in the industry. I know of only one man who takes a full-time role caring for his family while his wife works in the industry, yet he is viewed with suspicion by many women. We need to understand that we can't have it both ways if we want to operate on an equal footing!

The trade association for which I undertake part-time work is the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers. This is not specifically an organisation for women, but it does have an active collection of women within it who maintain their own unofficial support group. We

tend to take the lead in administration, marketing and public relation and in providing an organised structure in which the men can carry on their own work. It is a physically tough industry that demands long hours, and few women actively work at the sharp end because of this.

In my early days working part-time for the Association, I also had three small children to care for and an important support role to play in getting our own farm up and running. It was a constant juggling act, and the promotional role I was undertaking meant that stays away from home were often necessary.

Much as I admired and respected him, my boss at that time was a man with no ties, grown up children, and an extraordinary dedication to his work. This meant that excuses for work not done were not understood. Sick children had to be dealt with, not used as a reason to put back deadlines, and definitely not used as a reason for not turning up to meetings. I know that such attitudes are rife in any industry, but the sad fact is that they remain to this day.

I have found over the years when attending meetings with male colleagues, that I have been viewed perhaps as a secretary, rather than an equal. And certainly not as a farmer. “Blokes in boats” is as applicable to our industry as it is to the wider fishing industry.

One quickly learns to develop a thick skin and to deal with such discrimination with a quip, or even a sharper word. But do men listen or even care what the real situation is? I know that I have been regarded as rather “stropky” over the years, because I have insisted on putting across my point of view and putting straight, those who fail to understand.

Even when I promote the industry to the public, either through illustrated talks or selling products, people frequently seem incredulous that I should be a shellfish farmer. It is almost universally seen as a man’s work, but I have put in my share of time on the water, and have the scars to prove it!

However much women may want to work on farms, there are barriers to their doing so, and these include a lack of toilet and hygiene facilities on the water, and a rigid daily work pattern that has an early start and late finish, and cannot cope with days off to deal with

child care. With many farms at least a half-hour's boat trip from the shore, a request to finish early can break the day for the whole crew and is therefore not welcomed.

Whilst jobs in marketing and administration tend to pay reasonably well, at present the majority of jobs for women in our industry are lower quality processing positions, which are regarded merely as jobs, rather than careers. Many of the women in these positions lack either the training, the confidence, or both, to rise above these. What is needed is a genuine drive to improve the lot of these women, to give them the confidence to improve their position, and the training to make this a reality.

We also need to promote our industry to young people to make them aware of the type of opportunities available. Without a new generation coming onboard, can there be any future for shellfish farming? Certainly my own children are not interested – they have seen how hard we – and they – have to work on the farm and find it is not for them. There are too many soft options for young people these days and not enough primary production.

Women in aquaculture always feel that they have to work twice as hard as male colleagues in order to be recognised, but we are not afraid of hard work. It seems to me that in areas where manual labour is involved and this is particularly true in the fishing and aquaculture world, we are dealing with “unenlightened man”. This is the man who works in a comfortable, blokey world, where women are the adornments on the cabin wall, and the butt of jokes at coffee time. Perhaps he feels uncomfortable dealing with us on a professional level, and may even feel his job or position under threat from us. What he probably doesn't want is any change to his world.

I often find myself the butt of jokes when I put in a day at sea. “*Oh great, we've got the 'trolley dolly' here today*”, says the farm manager, purely to wind me up, but he knows that I will make the tea, and that I will clean the cabin and the cups before doing so, because I don't want to risk food poisoning. And by the way, trolley dolly is colloquial for tea lady. On days when I am there, I know that the team dynamic changes and they feel inhibited by my presence – not because I am a boss, but because I am a woman.

Over the years I have kept a note of comments from female colleagues in the wider aquaculture industry.

- There's a lot of sexist comments that fly around here and sometimes it's difficult not to let them get to me.
- You always feel that men are waiting for you to slip up, but you just have to prove yourself and become faster and better.
- The lifting can be tough when you are a small female, but if I asked for concessions, I would never live it down.
- My colleagues were reluctant towards me in the beginning, but once I had proved I knew what I was doing and could do my job well, they began to relax with me.
- When I started out I was ignored by clients because I was a woman and what could a woman know about aquaculture?
- People always addressed my male colleague until I started jumping in first, but there is a balance to be learned between being pushy and being accepted because you know what you are talking about.

The list goes on, but what all these women did was to refuse to give in and to fight for their jobs. Yes, it can be tough, but it is a generally tough world whatever industry you are in. I sometimes question whether we have the right attitude to our work and to our male colleagues. The world does not owe us a living and it can be very easy to fall back on a whole list of excuses as to why we are stuck in a particular position or why men seem to have an easier time of it. They may or may not do, but I feel we need to concentrate on our own needs and to forge ahead with new goals.

What we really need is an active women's association that can address our specific needs and I know that this lack is keenly felt by many. There are numerous issues which do not affect our male colleagues, nor are they interested in them. However, I realise that it is no use standing here moaning about what we are missing. What we need to do, is to set something up and to actively network with other women, but to do that takes commitment, time, effort, and not least of all, money – and this in short supply.

In my opinion, we need to learn how to sell ourselves better, to have faith in our own sex and not to be afraid to aim for higher things. It is heartening to come here to learn about the important work that is already being done to better and further the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture, and I hope that I will take away with me, many ideas to share with my Scottish colleagues ♦

Lena Talvitie

Boat owner fisherman's wife

Finland

Finnish women of Swedish origin constituted the first fisherwomen associations of Finland. Their activity has slowed down for some years, through lack of volunteers and money.

In the early 1990s, Camilla Österman from the Åland Islands had made contact with Norwegian women who were active in the Norwegian Fisherwomen's Association. Encouraged by the example of these women, Camilla and Sussie set up Ålands *Fiskarkvinnor* (Åland Fisherwomen's Group), which remains active.

Camilla and Sussie then visited us in Vasa and in turn recruited us. At the suggestion of the chairman of *Österbottens Fiskarförbund* (Österbotten Fishermen's Association), *Österbottens Fiskarkvinnor* (Österbotten Fisherwomen's Group) was established as a group under the auspices of the fishermen's association. *Österbottens Fiskarkvinnor* has never been an independent organisation, but operates with relative freedom within the fishermen's association. Operating as part of another body means we enjoy a degree of financial security. We have obtained the necessary funding for our work either from the fishermen's association or in the form of project grants, initially from the Ministry and more recently from the Employment and Economic Development Centre.

We were very active throughout the 1990s, one of our objectives being to gain entry at the levels where fisheries policy was conducted. It is fair to say we were partially successful. We gained representation on working groups and informal cooperative bodies. However, gaining entry to established organisational structures is difficult if not impossible. To put more weight behind our suggestions, we joined forces with Åland to make contact with Åboland and Nyland, the other Swedish-speaking regions of Finland. Together we formed

Finlandssvenska Fiskarkvinnor (the Association of Finland-Swedish Fisherwomen). In other words, we worked at the local, regional and Nordic levels. I shall now try to describe a little of what we have achieved, beginning with cooperation at Nordic level. I shall then move on to the regional and finally the local level, the last being the most important in my opinion.

Nordic cooperation started in the first half of the 1990s. Norway was the main driving force in encouraging the establishment of fisherwomen's organisations in several other Nordic countries. Our network was also recognized by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and I believe information about us can still be found on the Nordic Council's website. We have received project grants from the Nordic Council on several occasions. Together with fisherwomen's organisations in the other Nordic countries, we have tried our best to monitor and pursue the fisheries issues that matter to us.

One of our first initiatives at the Nordic level was to raise the issue of safety at sea in the fishing industry. At the time, the industry in several of the Nordic countries lacked any form of safety culture. We produced a report on harmonizing safety at sea throughout the Nordic countries, which struck a chord, and for a while we were regarded somewhat as "experts" on safety at sea in the fishing industry. I would go so far as to say that, thanks to our efforts, the issue of safety at sea was highlighted and the Nordic Council subsequently funded a further project on marine safety training, conducted by a university in Iceland.

We have attended Nordic Fisheries Conferences, held our own fisherwomen's conferences and seminars, and played an active part in workshops organised by other Nordic bodies. Following the publication of our report on harmonizing safety at sea throughout the Nordic countries, in summer 1997 we took part in the Nordic Council's conference on *Men and Women in Dialogue* at Valmiera in Latvia. There we were seen as rather strange, because we were talking about safety at sea, marine safety equipment and training for our men. Otherwise, the main focus of the conference was on equality issues.

We have always believed that our most important task is to look after the rights and interests of fishing families. In that respect, we may be seen as a little odd and perhaps not as a genuine women's organisation, since we focus primarily on the welfare of families as

a whole. As you all know, fishing is not an ordinary nine-to-five job, so neither is the situation of fisherwomen entirely normal.

Encouraged by the success of our safety-at-sea campaign, we took on another big project at the Nordic level. This time the subject was harmonizing socioeconomic security in the Nordic countries. The report covered topics such as the availability or lack of accident compensation, pensions and wage guarantees, plus regulation of fish quotas and so on.

The report devoted much coverage to the social protection available to women working at home, various forms of support, and, last but not least, the concept of declaring a missing person dead. As we worked on the report, it became clear that this concept varied in the different Nordic countries. With a view to achieving harmonization, we wrote to the government of each country setting out our demands and wishes. The report remains half complete, owing partly to lack of funding. Cooperating across national borders is expensive, and without the opportunity to meet, the network is dying out.

On this occasion we did not receive any funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers, as the project did not fit into the Council's programme at the time. Unfortunately both the EU and the Nordic Council require projects to be relevant to the current programme if they are to receive funding. If you have thoughts and ideas that you consider important and wish to pursue, your request for funding will be turned down if it does not fit into the programme.

It sounds as though we have achieved a great deal under the auspices of *Nordiska kust- och fiskarkvinnorna* (Nordic Coastal Women and Fisherwomen), as indeed we have. On those occasions when we were able to meet, we held our meetings in someone's hotel room—as women do—and put in a lot of work over one weekend. Most of us have always had jobs in addition to our administrative activities in the fisherwomen's organisation.

For organisational purposes, there is a secretariat that rotates between the Nordic countries, including Åland, the Faeroe Islands and Greenland. The working committee is chaired by the country that holds the secretariat—currently Sweden. That is all I have to say about cooperation at Nordic level. I am sure I could go on, but I hope I have given you a brief insight into our activities as Nordic Coastal Women and Fisherwomen.

Let us now take a look at regional cooperation, which now, unlike in the early years, exists only on paper. We believed we needed an umbrella organisation to lend weight to our

demands and wishes, but in this case we probably took on too much work and administration, since activities relied on voluntary work and only two active local organisations. Through *Finlandssvenska Fiskarkvinnor*, we tried to generate interest in fisherwomen's issues among our Finnish-speaking compatriots, but found this to be lacking. We also had an information stand at the Nordic Forum in Åbo (Turku).

I personally believe that one reason why regional cooperation was not a success was that we failed to find the right activists in Åboland and Nyland. Another factor was that, even then, those regions had already gone considerably further in restructuring their fishing industry than we had in Österbotten and Åland.

The regional organisation still exists on paper, so it can be activated if required. Why don't we do so? I think we should look for the answer to that question within our local organisation.

After Camilla and Sussie had come here to Vasa to recruit us, we set up a committee or working group comprising a number of activists. Locally, we have concentrated on practical activities, such as selling T-shirts and leisurewear advertising fish. We have published a collection of new and traditional fish recipes, first in Swedish and later translated into Finnish. We have supplied survival suits to our ocean-going vessels, and by purchasing them jointly we were eligible for a grant from the EU.

Our most demanding activity was selling fish and chips at a local market for several years. Although popular, this activity had to cease because it had become too much work for the activists involved.

When we were at our most active, we tried to hold a couple of village meetings in the surrounding area each year. Our area extends for about 300 km from north to south. On these village rounds, we provided information to local fisherwomen on topics such as the scope for small-scale processing and the available sources of financial support. The village meetings were well attended, but as soon as we tried to organise a larger meeting, people stayed away.

This all, sounds very good. So why isn't it working properly these days? There are several reasons, one being restructuring and poor profitability in the fishing industry. Women are

the first to look for other work when the fishing is poor. They cease to play an active role in the fishing business and instead pursue totally separate careers and interests. What is more, women in Finland are in a very fortunate position and don't have to fight for their rights. For this reason, people are unwilling or feel it unnecessary to get involved in the fisherwomen's movement. Another relevant phenomenon in modern Finnish society is that all voluntary organisations suffer from a lack of people who are able and willing to get involved. So we are not alone in experiencing this problem. Further factors are the waning enthusiasm of activists and shortage of funds. Unfortunately it is often the case that socially committed people become involved in too many committees, working groups and so on, until eventually their energy and willingness to contribute financially are exhausted.

In conclusion, I can say that we were very active in the 1990s, but that there has been little activity at local and national level since the year 2000. Following Finland's entry to the EU, our activities have focused more on European cooperation. For the time being, *Österbottens Fiskarkvinnor* is engaged in very little local activity, and the Nordic network too is inactive at present. In both cases, the main reason is a shortage of financial and human resources ◆

Sheryll Murray
Boat Owner fisherman's wife
United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) lags behind as far as the creation of fishermen's wives organisations is concerned: either women leave the fishing sector, or men discourage them from putting effort into it.

There are many reasons to form fisherwomen organisations. Most of the women who are Members of Organisations in the UK are members of the men's organisations. The reason is that the UK does not have women who conduct their own fishing businesses such as Shell Fish Collection or net mending. The culture of the UK Industry means this has not developed.

Years ago women did travel with their men from area to area and season to season and helped considerably with the mending, landing, salting etc. As the Industry modernised, the practice stopped.

Women now tend to carry out duties such as Book keeping and financial issues. Many UK women are not interested in the Industry and many are not permitted to become involved by their men.

The times are definitely changing with women beginning to see the loss of income through the quota cuts and Recovery Programmes. They are now beginning to take an interest in the Political side of the Industry and I believe a direct follow on will be the formation of women's organisations to take up social matters and also perhaps scientific research: Research looking at new stocks etc.

I do not think we will see women in the UK starting their own businesses because the UK is denied access to EU money by the UK government.

Whatever the case, the UK has now begun to see the formation of some women's groups. In Fraserborough, Northern Ireland, Shetland and the Moray Firth we are seeing women join together. One concern that I have is that we are seeing Political Parties trying to influence these women and I fear that if this happens it will destroy their cause before it has begun.

Relation with other representative structures such as professional (men) organisations, administration, social institutions)

There is a definite reluctance by some National Organisations in the UK to accept a women's organisation unless they are permitted to dictate the way in which the women operate. The Scottish White Fish producers' Organisation is one such body who have been known to offer money but then insist they say how it is to be spent.

There is however, one growing National Organisation who is now trying to establish a network of Women's Organisations throughout the UK.

I have seen a very different response to Women by the Men's Organisations over the past 12 years.

My personal experience in this area is probably better than any one else in the Room.

In 1991 a few colleagues and I worked together to "lobby" the British government against placing unilateral days at sea restrictions on our UK fishermen.

We called ourselves "the fishermen's friends". At this time we were taken very seriously by the Scottish White Fish Producers' Organisation (SWFPA) who gave us encouragement and financial support and allowed us to utilise this support as we saw fit. The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) supported us in a distant way and did not accept that women could learn about the Industry. They gave no financial support and very little encouragement. The Other National Body, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SSF) gave us very little acknowledgment but this may have been because the SWFPA had already been so supportive.

As time went on many of the women realised that they were getting very little financial assistance for their work and the Fishermen's Friends folded.

I was invited to become the Secretary of the Local Fishermen's Association and so I was able to continue to study the CFP regulations and with the help and assistance of 2 or 3 people from Men's Organisations and the fact that I won a Fax machine for having a letter published in a National paper, we communicated and achieved a complete grasp of the EU Legislation. I attended meetings of the Men's Organisation, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), and was often ridiculed and accused of being wrong about various proposals, only to be proven correct eventually although this fact was never acknowledged. I attended some meetings with the Commission and Ministry in the UK and gradually some of the men's organisations accepted that I knew my stuff and started to take notice of me.

I was then elected to the Board of the local Producers' Organisation and elected Chairman. This was a real asset in as much as I was able to improve my knowledge of the Legislation but the biggest mistake I could have made was that I was always viewed as being a mere "woman". If I did not agree with the men about something, I was ignored and in the end the situation became unbearable. They were determined to get rid of me and whilst I decided that I would not leave without a fight, they made sure the meetings were full of their supporters, denied me any rights to speak and I ultimately left.

It was then that the Fishermen's Association Ltd gave me the lift that I really needed and invited me to become a member of their Board of Directors. This was a real honour and I have to say that this Organisation has treated me as an equal and with the utmost courtesy at all times. This Organisation is now looking to forming a network of women's branches.

The Ministry in the UK and Officials are also very different in the way in which they treat women and the way in which they look to men. They cannot accept that women know as much and often more than men about this male dominated industry and I hope that this is one area that we will see change for the better within Europe ◆

DISCUSSION



Relationships between men's and women's organisations

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

"Women do not often speak up for themselves. Men do not see them as full partners, but rather as a threat. Women should form groups within fishermen's associations. Men and women would work much better together than in separate organisations."

Pencha Raposo, Spain:

"Most women's organisations were created to discuss their husbands' problems. Why are we dealing with men's working days and not women's endless days? What kind of equality are we looking for? Alcoholism due to overworking and stress? Women take care of all the housework, they look after the children, they fish, and so on. Women do too much. They have to gain awareness of their own power and no longer mollycoddle their husbands."

Françoise Edmonde Morin, France:

"It couldn't be possible for women to join men's organisations in France: the men took care of the production, but then women took over from them on land, either selling production or managing the family business. Therefore, the business came to stop when the fisherman stopped working, and fishermen's organisations did not concern themselves with the part of the work carried out by women. The law of 1901 (about associations) offered women the possibility of forming associations in order to defend their legal status. This involved promoting the independence of the women's work, starting off by identifying it. Women have very little influence in official bodies – there are only a handful of female elected representatives. In external bodies, however, they have a much greater influence. It would be suicidal to join fishermen's organisations without a higher level of influence."

Liliane Carriou, France:

"I am the vice-president of the Local Fishing Committee in Lorient (CLPM). I have been asked by the men to join the CLPM board. After six months of working together, I have noticed that information is difficult to obtain. I am chairperson of the social commission and of the training commission within the Committee. Meetings are now organised to include women, but the men are fairly reluctant about this. There are some women working on board fishing vessels now in Brittany."

Michèle Pendelièvre, France:

"I have been working in commissions set up by the local fishing committee of Le Guilvinec for many years now. When not everybody is wanted to take part in a meeting, a new commission is set up where only a small number of people are invited to vote."

Pencha Raposo, Spain:

"Our aims are not very clear. The way we present ourselves shows that we never present ourselves alone, but always with our families. Do we really wish to define our role using the term "*spouse employee*"? We share some of the blame for this male chauvinism. Our priority must be to put our families aside and become professionals. To take our rightful place means that we have to cut the ties with this paternalistic atmosphere. Women have the right to their own demands."

Siri Gerrard, Norway:

"Who can be considered to be a fisherman? We may be forced to redefine the sector. A lot of women do a superb job and develop work strategies. We must also learn from different practices. In the 1970s, a lot of small businesses worked in salmon-farming, employing female labour. Since that time, these businesses have been bought up by multinationals, and the sector is now male-dominated. Concentrating on particular aspects of different fields is the best direction for developing women's associations. Men work by symbols – they work closely with the environment and with the human side of the environment. Dialogue must be better-developed between women and with men. Learning is achieved through diversity."

Camilla Osterman, Finland:

"Are men mature enough to accept women? Mature enough to accept the idea of the benefits in working together? Women must be democratically elected in order to go beyond the difficulties of entering male organisations."

Françoise Edmonde Morin, France:

"This poses a problem with enlistment in the maritime register and the declaration of women's work."

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

"It is extremely difficult to take part in these organisations. Women must win this right. Female fish workers have a claim to be recognised as such, and desire to play a part in local, governmental and European debates. Participation in these organisations would enable this. But this is only on condition that women are not limited to having a say only on social issues! As if these issues are solely applicable to them! Women are not coming to these organisations for the sake of their children, but rather to discuss the CFP, Commissioner Fischler, etc.

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

I decided to run for office as a local councillor in order for my voice to be heard in the British parliament. To get elected at local level is one way of being heard without having to depend on men."

Siri Gerrard, Norway:

"Have women had an impact on fishing policy? Looking at the White Paper from the European Commission, we can see that requests coming from women are rarely taken into account – even requests not solely concerning their own situation. As for stock management, production and technology, White Papers are usually written from a masculine viewpoint. They are written in a very male idiom that women find as being completely out of touch with their everyday lives."

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

"As regards global fishing management, women are completely brushed to one side. In Portugal, only producers' associations and unions have a dialogue with government departments. They define the catches, which are then shared out by the producers' associations. Most of the fishing fleet is made up of small-scale fishing companies: 90% of boats are less than 10 metres long."

Siri Gerrard, Norway:

"It is important that women get involved, and the case described by Mariet about the Netherlands is an excellent example. We are sceptical in the face of the ultra-liberal European Union system. This is why we do not wish to join. The system of individual transferable quotas is a tool of international capitalism depriving men and women of control over fishing management. Fishermen know when to stop fishing, whereas the industrial giants are deaf to warnings of the depletion of stocks.

Very few women take part in official discussions, at whatever level. Female representatives from organisations are not being accepted. The whole official environment is very masculine in Norway. How do we gain access to official bodies? A lot has yet to be accomplished about this in a number of countries. I believe that international cooperation between women may enable us to gain influence in institutions. Everything points to the fact that we lack decision-making powers."

Katia Frangoudes, France:

"For example, do we know how many countries have associations for fishermen's wives? How many women work on board fishing boats? Are there any subjects that women are not being allowed to speak about?"

Answers:

There are two women working on board fishing vessels in Cornwall (United Kingdom).

In Normandy (France), there are three women qualified for fishing, but who remain unemployed due to discrimination.

Norwegian women have the same rights as male fishermen. They have a voice in both regional and national fishermen's organisations, but do not hold voting rights.

Léna Talvitie, Finland:

"Men and women have the same rights in Finland. Sexual equality is very well developed. As a consequence, if the wife of a fisherman is doing well, her family is also doing well."

Nicki Holmyard, Scotland:

"There aren't really any organisations for women in the United Kingdom. However, an organisation was founded in Scotland at the beginning of 2003 in order to defend the ideas of women at work."

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

"There are no female members of any fishers association. The position of Portuguese fishermen's wives is therefore never considered. Gaining visibility is all the more important, given that the country's general culture does not encourage the integration of women. A change must be brought about in people's mentality. The participation of women in fishing bodies is crucial, but for this to happen, women must organise themselves and group together. They must learn to cooperate. For the time being, they are turning their backs on the problem. Portugal is without doubt the country lagging behind the most in this regard. For us, this meeting is a learning experience.

But the question of working out whether women should group together in their own associations or whether they should join fishermen's organisations is not the right way to go about things. The two types of associations are, in fact, complementary. A women's association can be open to women from other industries and gain more influence for shared demands. The wives of Portuguese fishermen often work in the dishing business, and their inclusion in industry organisations is fully justified.

The local level is important, as it makes it easier for women to group together and have enough time to participate in the work of an association based close to where they live. But national associations have a more comprehensive view of issues" ◆

About the mariscadoras of Galicia

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

"Do Galician associations representing female shellfish farmers receive EU funding? Are you recognised as a professional organisation (PO) as the European Union understands it?"

Isabel Perez Fernandez, Spain:

"We are members of the Galician fisheries council. We are recognised as professionals and benefit from the same social rights as male fishermen. The *mariscadoras* groups are members of *Cofradias*, old fishermen's associations going back to the Middle Ages and which have varying levels of influence, depending on the region. There are no "professional organisations" as such in Spain. We only have the *Cofradias*, which act as a brake on the development of the fishing industry. For the time being, the *mariscadoras* groups have no independent legal status and are represented by the *Cofradias*. Some *Cofradias* may refuse the inclusion of *mariscadoras* groups. The Galician fishing authorities have been a great help to us. The *Cofradias* are funded through sales made at auction and not through public subsidies."

Mariet Groen, Netherlands:

"As regards the minimum shellfish price set by the *mariscadoras*, have you encountered any problems with the authorities relating to competition law?"

Isabel Perez Fernandez, Spain:

"We cannot sell our shellfish other than at auction and we may not leave the *Cofradia*. However, it is up to us whether we sell or refuse to sell shellfish. We set the price between members, in order to avoid excessive differences between prices. We have not been punished by the authorities. Before, it was Galician buyers who agreed upon and set the prices. The women's organisation enabled this situation to be reversed, and agreed on a minimum price for each area."

Mariet Groen, Netherlands:

"This is what we decided to do in the Netherlands with shrimp, and we were fined four million euros by the monopolies and competition authorities in the name of consumer protection" ◆

**II -
COLLECTIVE ACTIONS**

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Associations formed by fishermen's wives strive for safety at sea, psychological support for victims, the promotion of responsible fishing practices and the defence of small-scale fishing. These subjects are not specific to women, in contrast with professional training for women or claims for women's fishing rights. Are these associations therefore duplicating men's associations? Or do they merely represent a change in direction for feminist movements? Neither. First of all, fishermen have been unwilling to look into certain claims, such as safety at sea and victim support. That simply wouldn't be manly. And anyway, things like that only ever happen to other people. And on issues that the men do deal with, particularly those regarding resource management and political decisions, women take on issues from a different angle – usually looking at the bigger picture. They are more willing to think about the transmission of fishing heritage, and therefore of the durability of the fishing trade. They also worry more about what happens once the fish have been sold, and are therefore more open to the idea of marketing products and the promotion of recreational fishing as a way to diversification. And even when they fight for causes which at first glance appear to concern only them, such as the right to training or to the status of spouse employee, they are in fact defending fishing incomes and the fishing industry ◆

1 -
Safety at sea

Liliane Carriou

***President of FETEM, association and Federation for
Women in a Maritime World (2FM)
Boat owner fisherman's wife***

Information campaigns for fishermen, the lobbying of public authorities, talks within the couple – everything is in place to provide fishers with rules for care and safety, to encourage them to wear safety clothing, to encourage them to take courses in first-aid, etc.

A health and safety commission for fishermen has been in place since the creation of our association in 1999. Tragedies that have occurred out at sea confirm the need for such a commission. Safety has to be developed, and an improvement in the ease of use for Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) is essential.

Fishermen's wives and partners are the day-to-day link between the sea and dry land for fishing vessels.

Members of our association have been badly affected by disasters out at sea. We know how accidents at sea, or shipwrecks, can destroy a family. We know that fishermen have the most dangerous jobs in the world. For thirty years, fishermen's wives have been hearing about safety onboard fishing vessels, but have not seen any change.

Some members of our association, the partners of boat owners and crew members, have taken paid "health and safety" training courses organised by the Maritime Accident Prevention Institute (IPM). These courses have been aimed at the wives of boat-owners and crew members working on vessels of under twelve metres.

These courses surprised us by showing just how dangerous it is to work on board fishing vessels at all times – in both calm seas and bad weather – irrespective of the size of the vessel, be it a trawler, a gillnetter, a seiner or a long liner. There are risks posed by vessel fittings (falls, collisions, accidents) and there are also risks posed by working conditions (lack of sleep, noise, working strain, etc). It is possible to anticipate these risks and accidents by wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and by upgrading equipment.

As a result of this training, we have followed and taken on board the "*Speaking out about falling overboard*" campaign, led by the IMP. We have put up posters in ports, hospitals, doctors' surgeries and shops. We have contacted fishermen on the dockside and handed over Institute leaflets. We have stuck car stickers on fishing company vehicles, onboard ships and on all our mail.

Wearing PFDs

Since 1999, FETEM members have been in favour of requiring fishermen to wear PFDs while carrying out their work. We started with a survey in the maritime zone of Lorient. Fishermen had never heard of PFDs, but we persuaded them to try them out. Our intention was to buy several types of PFDs using our own funds, and have fishermen try them out on different types of fishing vessels. We contacted various Personal Flotation Device suppliers, who appeared uninterested in our plans. It was made obvious to us that safety in the fishing industry did not represent a large enough market for them. All our association members were deeply shocked by the lack of interest displayed by the suppliers, and we had to ask ourselves just how much a fisherman's life was worth.

Lacking sufficient funds, our association was unable to complete this project. We, therefore, took the decision have to put this case before the 2FM Federation.

Up to now, ENIM has awarded significant financial assistance to this project. Thirty-two vessels for all types of fishing gears along the whole French coastline have tested various types of PFD. Valued at €22 867, this experiment came to an end on 30th March 2002. We carefully monitored the tests. For this phase of the trials, four types of apparel currently available on the market were used: belts, safety vests, lifejackets and overalls. The Maritime Accident Prevention Institute prepared a brochure that was handed out to sea fishermen.

Safety onboard fishing vessels comes at a high price: a global satellite safety system (GMDSS, VHF), beacons, safety garments, lifeboats and personal flotation devices. Furthermore, fishing companies are currently suffering from labour shortages. Working and living conditions often get left behind, causing an increase in working accidents onboard fishing vessels and training and safety measures are no longer a priority.

Safety days

"Safety days" are held on various themes: the risks of falling overboard into cold waters, the presentation of existing safety equipment, lifeboats, etc. These days are currently organised along the whole coast by women's associations (Sables d'Olonne) and by Local Fisheries' Committees.

Claims

For the members of the *FETEM* association safety measures needed urgent attention. A safety onboard fishing vessel requires, above all, the recruitment of a sufficient number of skilled people. It also requires the renewing of fishing fleets, better training in fishing schools, further education on offer to all concerned, and the distribution of information to all fishermen.

Women see danger from a whole other perspective, as we provide a link between the sea and dry land. With this in mind, we have an unwavering, clear view of the dangerous nature of our husbands' and partners' professions. We are well aware that there is no such thing as 'no risk'. We can accept this, and we know that we can make effective proposals for maritime safety ◆

May-Britt Bratseth

***Former boat owner fisherman's wife
Norway***

To make insecurity at sea a draw back, Norwegian women point out that the safer the job is, the more profitable it becomes and the more it attracts young and educated people.

“I live in Bremanger, in the north of Western Norway and I run my own business. I am married to a former fisherman who now works in fisheries administration. My father was a fisherman, and I have two brothers and two sons-in-law who are also fisherman.

Over a number of years, *Norges Fiskerkvinnelag* (the Norwegian Fisherwomen's Association) has won extensive recognition for its efforts aimed at improving safety on board fishing vessels. As so often, earlier efforts have won acceptance and recognition as a result of particular situations such as sinkings, accidents, near misses and search operations. A great many fishermen, families and friends would be in a very different position today if the fisherwomen and others had not demonstrated such a commitment to safety issues over many years.

In recent years the majority of trades and professions in Norway have seen large resources being devoted to health and safety, to make the workplaces safe and productive. But in fishing industry, by far the greatest effort has gone into economic battles and defence of fisheries resources, at the detriment, in my opinion, of health and safety issues.

Fishing is one of the most dangerous jobs in existence. People in coastal communities have grown up with stories of sinkings, accidents, financial ruin, tears and loss. There is no escaping the fact that a great many fishermen used to be, and still are, typical “macho

males”. In such a competitive, male-dominated business, the rope is stretched beyond safe limits in many situations. The keywords here are long shifts, little sleep, bad weather and the hunt for the “jackpot”. This is what the fisherwomen have been tackling, particularly over the past 25 years, because they couldn’t tolerate living in a family situation where they were in constant fear of what might happen at sea. One result of this was that their daughters took this “insecure” situation into account when they came to choose their partners later on in life—and fishermen were not at the top of their list. It is no coincidence that typical fishing communities have a large shortage of women.

Fisherwomen’s commitment

Key politicians, political parties and bureaucrats have often received “delegations” of fisherwomen, which is a unique experience for them. They have encountered a group of women with a commitment that is difficult to resist. Women call a spade a spade. This is particularly apparent in matters relating to searches for those lost at sea. What often makes these situations incredibly challenging and absurd for fisherwomen is the fact that, after a “brief” official search, the surviving relatives have to step in to ensure the search continues. The fishing industry, so vital to Norway, deserves better than having to beg on its knees for more money to search for those lost at sea. The situation has improved in recent years, but there is a long way still to go until we are satisfied—and we will not give up until we are.

As a rule, surviving relatives face a difficult financial situation, particularly when the body is not recovered and they are therefore unable to obtain a death certificate. Gradually, acceptable arrangements to deal with this situation have been established in association with insurance companies, banks and the police. At most, it now takes a year before everything is in place. One thing that happens with lightning speed, though, is the first aid and support given to surviving relatives by their fellow fisherwomen—a task of immense importance, performed by fisherwomen in association with various others. Many fisherwomen possess valuable experience in this area.

Safety training for fishermen is a huge step forward. The issue has been at the very top of our campaigning agenda for many years. Without wishing to boast, we have been the driving force on this issue in Norway. Financial arrangements have now been put in place whereby safety training and all travel and accommodation expenses, minus a small

personal contribution, are free. The oil industry has been of great assistance in developing safety training programmes for fishermen. Countless fishermen started out as oil workers before returning to fishing, and they have been a positive influence and a great help in raising awareness of the importance of health and safety. In turn, this makes the workplace more profitable and challenging.

This commitment of fisherwomen to improve workplace safety at sea, to support those in difficulties as a result of accidents, injuries and the like, with influence coming generations to engage in fishing and aquaculture trades. For us fisherwomen and others with the interests of coastal regions at heart, it is all about the survival and future development of our fishing communities. ◆

Patricia Paredes Soto
Crewman wife
Spain

The Rosa Dos Ventos association was founded in the 1980s in order to improve working conditions for crewmen onboard of industrial fishing vessels and develop their families' social rights. Whilst doing all this, women gained a great deal of self-confidence.

Patricia Paredes Soto is the secretary of the Rosa Dos Ventos association, which groups together one hundred crewmen's wives, whose husbands work on board industrial fishing vessels. The association, created in 1991, has its roots in a movement dating from the 1980s. In 1984, several crewmen's wives groups were created along maritime parishes lines, in order to defend social and family rights, as well as the crewmen's work.

These women set up an organisation to come to the assistance of crewmen working in industrial fisheries of the Canaries-Sahara zone, who were in conflict with boat owners over negotiations for a collective labour agreement. 15,000 signatures were collected in April 1990, to support the claims expressed by the women's commission. This brought about an improvement of the safety at sea, thanks to the purchase of two ocean-going tugs, two helicopters and four fast launches.

After a year of intensive work, the crewmen's wives founded the *Rosa dos Ventos* (Wind rose) association - a name evoking their main cause of fighting in favour of onboard crewmen in the Saharan zone. This association is run independently of any political or governmental party.

In December 1993, the association took part in a meeting of fishermen's wives from the EU Member States concerning the prevention of accidents onboard fishing vessels this meeting was held in Luxembourg. Several years later, the association took part in a meeting of the Family, Childhood and Solidarity Intergroup of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. During this meeting, *Rosa dos Ventos* association was given the opportunity to publicly address the problems faced by crewmen's families.

Following these meetings, Rosa dos Ventos committed itself to many European projects tackling crewmen families' issues, working conditions and crew rights onboard vessels in the large-scale fishing industry. Reconciling work at sea with family life was the principal objective for these schemes.

The association is currently involved in a campaign for raising awareness to make work out at sea more humane. It is fighting for the implementation of protection of labour and social welfare for deep-sea fishermen and their families. In order to get to this point, *Rosa dos Ventos* participates in various meetings taking place at national and international level.

Rosa dos Ventos has international links with several NGOs and organisations, such as the Sea Mission, the Catholic Committee against hunger and for development (CCFD, France) and the International Collective in Support to Fishworkers (ICSF) with headquarters in India and Brussels. These international relationships with organisations pursuing the same interests as *Rosa dos Ventos* are important sources of training education and exchange.

Rosa dos Ventos campaigns for improving the level of education and growth for its members. To do this, training on labour and social law is organised, with funding from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. When all is said and done, women participating in *Rosa dos Ventos* gain a great deal of self-confidence ◆

DISCUSSION



Safety at Sea

Camilla Osterman, Finland:

"Safety at sea and crisis management are key issues. An EU directive deals with the safety issue. But what use is having so much safety equipment if nobody knows how to use it? Training is central to this issue. Regular training sessions for using this equipment is necessary. A group has been formed within the Red Cross for crisis management. It comes to the help of the affected families. Where we are, there is a body we can turn to request psychological support. But a lot remains to be done, particularly regarding "smaller" accidents."

Katia Frangoudes, France:

"In Norway, just as in France, women are actively involved in the field of men's safety out at sea. To a certain extent, their voice is heard. Does the work of women have any impact on the behaviour of men working out at sea? Are there any examples of other countries where psychological support is given to families?"

Joan O'Doherty, Ireland:

"The development of safety has always been thanks to women. There is an Irish organisation called "Lost" available to assist people involved in accidents at sea. It is usually up to the people concerned to carry out the appropriate steps for seeking help, but they rarely come forward. Psychological "rescue" is a whole other struggle to face after being rescued at sea. We have the possibility of returning fishermen to dry land. Now we have to make people think about psychological rescue as well."

Begoña Marugan Pintos, Spain:

"The Spanish authorities issue death certificates for people lost at sea after two months. What is the situation in Norway?"

May Britt Bratseth, Norway:

"These matters are left to the police, who may take years to issue a death certificate if the body is not found. But the final decision varies, depending on the case at hand: in the event of a shipwreck with multiple losses, only one body has to be found to make the procedure the same for all those involved. The minimum waiting period is one year."

Anne Marie Esteban, France:

"Fishermen and crewmembers receive safety training at fishing schools. But technology develops quickly and they do not know how to use the new equipment. I was able to have an influence on my husband's behaviour, who for example demanded the presence of all crewmembers during safety exercises. He also recently agreed to wear a personal flotation device."

Camille Osterman, Finland:

"We regularly organise safety training. But it is true that men often put on a macho attitude, and some crewmembers don't come because they say they cannot swim. Safety vests are nowadays more and more suitable, more comfortable and more accessible, but the message still has to be put across."

Begoña Maruga Pintos, Spain:

"Safety lessons are obligatory in Spain. It is illegal to board a fishing vessel without a licence awarded at the end of the lessons. It is surprising to find out about the disparities that exist between countries."

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

"Captains are obliged to make on board risk assessments. If they do not do this, insurance companies will not pay any compensation in the event of an accident. This is a persuasive form of pressure. As for psychological support, the issue of alcohol consumption on board also has to be addressed."

Michèle Pendelièvre, France:

"We are seeking to implement a "required policy" to be made official regarding psychological support, even for accidents not resulting in any deaths. Psychological support must be a right and an obligation entered into law, and not a favour. For fishermen, family is all the more important. The only problem is to have work-related accidents recognised in the case of psychological trauma after the event."

Patricia Paredes Soto, Galicia:

"We are exposed to a lot of accidents. A hundred people were killed on the Galician coasts in 1989. Since 1990, several public requests have been made. We compiled 15,000 signatures that we presented to the fishing council. Result: we got four high-speed crafts, two helicopters and two sea-going tugs – a satisfactory result. We have insisted on safety onboard these vessels – particularly the need to impose training. These tests of safety at sea are obligatory for people to receive a sailing qualification. We have absolutely nothing against psychological support, but we help each other out among families. A family has to seek help by itself."

Mary Britt Bratseth, Norway:

"All boats are classified. They are subject to checks on their rescue equipment. In relation to crisis management in coastal communities, there is an intervention team available every day, whether there are any fatalities or not."

Carina Rönn, Finland:

"I would like to give a few details about the issue of safety at sea. Some years ago, safety standards were imposed and obligatory training was introduced for crewmembers for 10-metre boats. For boats over 24 metres, crewmembers have to undergo fuller, more specialised training. In reality, a lot of people only undergo the obligatory basic training. We have tried to improve this by offering a mobile training centre, but few fishermen have taken part in the training sessions. Before, more women than men were there. The reverse is true today, as we can see that women are moving into other professions. There appear to be limits on the feminisation of the fishing industry."

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

"Regarding safety, we have to make a distinction between safety and compensation. In Portugal, safety training is targeted more at captains than on other crew members. It is the mutual insurance company that takes care of crew safety and first aid training. The government maintains a great distance from the subject. There is some obligatory basic training, with other more advanced courses which remain optional. As regards the growing awareness for personal protection among fishermen (safety, health), conditions on board vessels also have to be taken into account, as this is also the fisherman's home whilst out at sea. We cannot talk about safety without also talking about health. Once again, it is the mutual insurance company which takes care of this."

Begoña Marugan Pintos, Spain:

"Spanish fishermen take different training courses depending on the jobs they do. There are three levels – the third is obligatory for boat-owners, who have to know how to use the first-aid kit. Health matters are dealt with in obligatory training at all levels. For the industrial fleet, vessels must always have a doctor on board. Furthermore, the State has been funding hospital-boats for the past ten years, fitted with a surgery."

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

"In the United Kingdom, each fisherman must theoretically take basic rescue and fire-safety lessons, but this does not happen in practice. For medical care, the Royal Navy has rescue helicopters which take doctors to vessels in case of emergency. Everything is very clear from an insurance point of view: all insurance policies are null and void if the captain or the boat's second-in-command does not hold the required safety certificates."

Gunda Nilsen, Norway:

"We have a coastguard service which goes into action in the event of an accident, assisted by rescue helicopters. Boat-owners are obliged to insure their crew on boats with more than one fisherman. The costs are shared between all those onboard. Captains all have to take a first aid course. The State may take care of some of the expenses."

Carina Rönn, Finland:

"For fishing in waters near the coast, captains have to take a first-aid course. In the event of a serious accident, a helicopter is available in Turku. As regards insurance, insured staff members are compensated in the event of illness, irrespective of the size of the vessel. Insurance is considerably increased by premiums, above all for common accidents"◆

2 -
Psychological support

Sonia Bourhis
Boat Owner fisherman's wife
France

Psychological treatment for accidents at sea have not yet been made systematic, either for triggering assistance or for the harmonisation of methods used across coastal regions.

My husband owns a small eight metre long boat for coastal fishing and works alone. He lost his father in a shipwreck in 1981. At the time, psychological support for families was unheard of. Nothing was done to help them for psychological relief and help them to rebuild.

Within the Association for Women between the Earth and the Sea, we have all been affected to some extent, by old or recent disasters at sea. This was the starting point for our initiative.

Our first step was to contact the local press to promote a psychological support for families. We know there have been some emergency units deployed for sudden disasters. In France, the first Medical-Psychological Emergency Unit (*CUMP - Cellule d'Urgence Médico-Psychologique*) was introduced in 1995, in response to terrorist attacks. A national network was created in 1997 to take care of medical-psychological emergencies to respond to disasters.

The CUMP is activated by an order of the Prefect representing the French State in the departments. Its task is to implement a medical-psychological emergency point close to the places where a disaster occurred, to provide first health care and to give psychological support to traumatised victims.

In response to the articles printed in the press, the director of the social issues department of the sea fisheries authorities has informed us that social workers have recently been given training in providing psychological support to the victims of sea disasters.

Using the information gathered, we have produced an information sheet explaining to our members how the medical-psychological units operate. We have seen that this system only comes into effect in response to major disasters involving loss of life: it does not operate for individual deaths or for major incidents with much suffering, but no loss of life. To improve this situation, our association called for two meetings, organised by the Regional Maritime Affairs authorities. A number of others fisheries industry actors were involved: the Maritime Affairs Office, the Maritime Social Services Office, the Local fund for those lost at Sea, the Local Fisheries Committee for southern Finistère, the Regional Fishing Committee, a semi-industrial boat-owner's enterprise, a trade union.

Our demands were as follows:

- The development and extension of social worker training courses for all people working with fishermen or their families following a disaster out at sea.
- The creation of a list including the contact details of specialised therapists, to be given to seafarer's families.
- Financial cover for this specialized therapy to be provided by Maritime Social Security Office.
- A statement informing victims of the long-term consequences of such events.
- Recognition of the psychological problems connected to disasters at sea as being equivalent to accidents in the workplace
- The creation of discussion groups, as necessary.

The results are as follows:

- Training for staff from the Maritime Affairs' office in listening and supporting fishermen's families following disasters at sea.
- The creation of a document listing the details of people to contact following a disaster at sea, and a guide to the administrative steps to be taken at local regional level.

- Funding for this document will come from the national authorities, and the aim will be to distribute it to all French maritime households.

Furthermore, a meeting held between our Inter-regional Federation of Coastal Women (F.I.F.E.L) and the National Director of seafarers' social services has resulted in a pilot scheme with the aim of:

- Therapist training in coastal medicines
- The introduction of a targeted intervention methodology

For the time being, this scheme is undergoing preparation and will be circulated among all the associations of fishermen and shellfish farmers' wives in France. We will carry on taking an active part in this pilot scheme. The main objective is to bring about the introduction of systemic psychological support at both individual and group level.

We are currently appealing against this ruling and are awaiting a response. If this response does not go in our favour, we will have to pay four million euros. If we divide this by the number of fishermen, that makes 10,000 euros each. The German and Swedish fishermen who were also involved in Court for the same reason have not been punished by their countries' authorities ◆

Liliane Capobianco

***The Corsican Association for Fishermen's Wives
Fisheries Social Worker***

Psychological support after disasters at sea is now commonplace, but its methods remain unsatisfactory: lack of trained personnel, support too late in arriving, etc.

The public authorities have taken the decision to set up measures for psychological support for fishermen and their families who have been the victims of shipwrecks or serious accidents at sea. The growing number of accidents at sea, strong demand from women's associations, and pressure brought to bear by social workers all contributed to the implementation of this measure.

Maritime social workers have been trained in caring for victims, through courses taught by psychologists specialising in emergencies (terrorist attacks, wars, hostage crisis, etc). Thanks to this level of training, social workers are able to carry out one of their duties – psychosocial assistance to families. This assistance is supplementary to that of psychologists.

A collaborative network, grouping together the social services for fishermen, regional medical psychological emergency response units, or their local branches, including doctors and psychologists is currently being put together.

But this is still not enough: on the one hand, training undertaken by social workers is short; on the other hand, social workers are not always available at the time of an accident. Furthermore, medical and Medical-Psychological Emergency Unit addresses should be widely publicised so the psychological assistance can be granted immediately. Finally, there are persistent problems in getting an accident and its consequences recognised by the social and administrative authorities ◆

3 -

Defending artisanal fisheries

G*unda Nilsen*

Former boat owner fisherman's wifer

Norway

Norwegian fisherwomen's associations, grouped together in the NFK, went through three main periods: first charitable, then more feminist, and now they are interested in all the questions affecting Norwegian fisheries.

Norwegian women have a tradition of banding together to form nationwide humanitarian or voluntary organisations, and fisherwomen are no exception. Until they formed their own organisations, fisherwomen also played an active part in local fishermen's associations.

The first fisherwomen's organisation to be formed was called *Damegruppen Havglimt* (the Shining Sea Women's Group) and was founded in the coastal town of Kristiansund on 7 January 1946. The idea of forming a women's group had come from the then chairman of the town's fishing association.

There were several reasons behind the group's formation, the main one being a desire to improve conditions for fishermen. Another motivating factor was the women's sense of mutual solidarity and by organizing various fundraising events they were able to donate money to the dependants of fishermen who had been lost at sea, suffered illness or died.

This led to the establishment of *Fiskernes hjelpefond* (the Fishermen's Aid Fund), which gave money to fishermen who were unable to work through illness—effectively becoming a form of health insurance. Money was also paid to fishermen's widows and their families. This type of fund was adopted by most fisherwomen's associations in Norway and continued to exist until the welfare state assumed responsibility in the 1970s.

Within a short time, a series of fisherwomen's associations were formed along the Norwegian coast, but in the early years they had little contact with one another. This changed when organisations were formed at county level, until eventually our position had become so strong that *Norges Fiskerlag* (the Norwegian Fishermen's Association) decided it was necessary to review our position in relation to its own organisation. This culminated in the formation of our nationwide organisation as part of *Norges Fiskerlag*, under the

name *Norges Fiskerlag Kvinnelag* (the Norwegian Fishermen's Association Women's Group).

The organisation consisted of associations at three levels: local, county and national. A membership fee was introduced as a token of individual membership and a means of funding the groups' work. The amount was symbolic, as it in no way covered the association's true costs, but our working relationship with *Norges Fiskerlag* was harmonious, and we were able to attend courses and conferences on the same terms as organised fishermen. We were financially dependent on *Norges Fiskerlag*, which also had to approve our minutes.

Norges Fiskerkvinnelag remained part of *Norges Fiskerlag* until 1983, when our national conference decided that we should be an independent organisation responsible for our own finances and decision making, while continuing to work closely with *Norges Fiskerlag*. As a result, the association was granted observer status within *Norges Fiskerlag*. Our tasks have been many and varied, but the aim has always been to promote the socioeconomic interests of fishermen and their families.

The social-security system was slow to develop, and the arrangements for fishermen were particularly poor. This generated a commitment among fisherwomen to improve welfare benefits, and over the years we have pursued this issue along with those of insurance, safety on board and safety in port. Most benefit schemes have now been taken over by the state, but we are now campaigning for fishermen, like others, to be able to take compassionate leave in the event of illness in the family without suffering adverse financial consequences.

We have also seen it as our task to preserve coastal culture, to encourage the next generation to recognize the enormous progress that Norway has made since the Second World War, and to show that commitment pays off, even though it often takes a long time to achieve results. We have not always been appreciated by our men folk. Some of them have labelled us as red-stockinged militants, but gradually they have come to realize the value of our efforts in terms of their own safety, rights and social provision.

In conclusion, I would go so far as to say that the existence of *Norges Fiskerkvinnelag* has been and continues to be of great importance to fishermen and fishing communities ♦

***J*oan O' Doherty**

Joint owner of a trawler

Ireland

It is a small step from safety at sea to the reflection on European fishing policy. Joan took the plunge, but could not make herself heard by her country's authorities.

If I were to die tomorrow I would say that I had a good life. The period of my life, concerned with being a fisherwoman in the public arena, however, would not rank among the bright periods of my life.

I would like to tell you my story as a woman living in a fishing community in the Republic of Ireland for 24 years.

In 1977, I married a school teacher, but he was a school teacher whose parents were from 2 separate islands, and so growing up he spent all his spare time on the one of the islands with his grandmother and four bachelor uncles.

When I first met Mick, he had been teaching for 8 years but had just applied for a grant for a fishing vessel. He had decided to give up teaching and try his hand at his first love, fishing. For my own reasons I was excited and off we headed. I had five children in 6 years and life was busy, living in a community 50 kilometres from the nearest shop which would sell buttons, 120 kilometres from the nearest hospital, and 3 kilometres up a steep incline from the nearest telephone. 10 years later, when my youngest was 3 years of age and with the telephone service newly arrived, an accident happened at sea. 9 o' clock one morning, while my other half was having a bath, having just arrived in from two weeks away fishing, I heard on the radio that there had been an accident at sea and that one man was dead and another seriously injured. The dead man was the skipper of the vessel. No name was given. The vessel's home port was Killybegs and the boat was on its way to port. A phone call later and I had the name.

When Mick emerged from the bathroom and heard the name he was shocked. The island he had spent his summers on had 25 houses and the skipper who had died had grown up in one of them. He, unlike Mick, had gone straight into fishing and was, in 1988, the skipper and owner of one of the largest and newest fishing boats in the Irish fleet. He was highly skilled and qualified. How could the skipper of such a large undertaking have died?

We later learnt that he had bled to death. There had been an accident on board, and because of our poor search and rescue services there was no craft of any description able to reach the vessel in less than 4 hours. In Ireland, in 1988, we had 5 sophisticated Dauphin helicopters but they were all stationed in Dublin. There were 28 lifeboat stations but 25 of these were stationed on the east coast and only 3 of these were on the west coast, where our most treacherous waters were; our radio centres were under the auspices of 6 different government departments and consequently little development work was ever undertaken.

Accidents happened at sea every year, part of the job. Drink, inexperience, poor equipment were often cited, but here we had a skipper, not a crew member, of the most modern vessel in the fleet and he bled to death 3.5 hours journey time off our coast. Such things should not happen in 1988, I thought.

I do not want to go into detail of what transpired next. It was 17 months of 20 hour days but the result was that the Irish government spent in excess of £30 million in revamping the rescue service. Existing helicopters were relocated to the west coast, larger helicopters and crew were leased to operate to 200 miles off our coast, all the radio centres and other aspects were incorporated into the Marine rescue services, under one agency and more lifeboat stations were opened up on the west coast: all within 17 months. I spearheaded and chaired that campaign.

I decided to go to University. I embarked on a part time masters programme which entailed a 350 mile round trip every weekend for 2 years. My thesis was on aspects of the Irish fishing industry which had bothered me and which troubled me further while I was doing the rescue campaign. What really was driving the shape of the Irish fishing industry into super large vessels, EU policies or government grants? I came up with conclusions tabulated by employment per sector and per grant.

I published my findings. For quite a while I was approached by outsiders, always those outside the country to assist with reports and talks on the state of the Irish fishing industry but nothing from within the country.

Apparently I had raised issues and topics which should be kept within 'the family' and were not for public discussion. I knocked on many doors but was not allowed in. I spoke in Canada, Irish government agencies funded my trip, I spoke at an EU conference in Portugal, and was invited to speak in Denmark, UK and even Argentina, but never in Ireland, on the fisheries topic, by mainstream organisations.

In the mid 1990's there was much talk about the impending review of the Common Fisheries due for 2002. I decided that I would take time out to really study the topic and attempt to make a real contribution to the review. Four-five years later, older and wiser on Ireland's fisheries from the 11th century through to 2000, having undertaken original research I gained my PhD. but still no recognition. All requests for work, or opportunity to contribute were met with silence. Ireland apparently has no need for multidisciplinary understanding of their fisheries. They have no need for activists who achieved results. For ten years I had a monthly radio slot where I spoke of impending EU regulations. Now I live in England, do odd jobs and write.

Such is my experience of being a fisherwoman within public action in Ireland in the years 1988 to 2002 ◆

Mariet Groen
Boat owner fisherman's wife
Netherlands

Netherlands' public authorities denounced a shrimpers / distributors agreement that regulated supply and prices, thus opening a deep crisis. While their husbands are at sea, women plead the fishing community's cause.

As I write this, we are facing a big crisis. The price for shrimp is crashing and at the same time there is a weekly destruction of thousand of kilograms of (small size) shrimps, because of an oversupply in the market. Many of the shrimp fishing enterprises will not survive. My husband is fishing for seven days at the moment, but our earnings are so low, that we hardly have money left for our daily needs. This morning, when I wanted to pay for my groceries, I discovered I had no money left. I felt so embarrassed. How could this happen in a wealthy country like the Netherlands?

Shrimp fishing is one of the traditional Dutch fishery sectors (about 20 percent of the Dutch cutter fleet). In particular in the north of our country, coastal villages depend on this fishery. Shrimp fishery is predominantly a small scale sector and typically family based, where women play an important role. Women are mostly responsible for the bookkeeping and the dealing with the banks and the auction. Some women also go fishing with their husbands.

Some years ago, we had a similar situation like today. Because of the low market prices for shrimp, the shrimp fishers tried to catch as much as possible, for reasons of survival. There was a true survival of the fittest battle going on. The cold stores of the traders were completely filled and there was no option other than to destroy the shrimp harvest (into

fishmeal). This is one of the worst things that can happen to a fisherman, because a real fisherman fishes to feed the population. It was at this time that our fishermen came to the conclusion that this situation should not continue. And what was earlier only a dream became a reality. Shrimp fishers from Denmark, Germany and Netherlands, organised in producers organisations, sat around the table to discuss a voluntary regulation of the shrimp capture. They decided autonomously a reduction of the number of fishing days and a maximum quantity of shrimp supply. With this “tri-lateral” agreement they approached the two trading companies that dominated the (European) shrimp market and came to a deal about quantity of supply and a minimum price. These two trading companies would certainly benefit from this deal, because they now had secured a guaranteed supply.

With the exception of one producers’ organisation, all shrimp fishers complied with the agreement. The prices went up and the incomes of the fisher families improved. The fishermen now were home in the weekends and could spend time with their family. For the first time in years, my husband, myself and the children could go together on a holiday. Fishermen again could invest in the maintenance of their boats and young fishermen again were eligible for bank loans to start on their own. Of course there were still good and bad years, but in general we could make a good living from the shrimp fishery. There were no longer cold stores filled to the ceiling, bulk-purchase prices and the destruction of the shrimp harvest. Also the environmental organisations praised our initiative.

Alas.....to all of this came an end. By mid-January, the Anti-cartel Authority of the Netherlands decided to fine our shrimpfish sector, because of our agreement and our deal with the trading companies. They said that for years our practice has put the consumers at a disadvantage. The fines were exorbitant, Euro 4 million for the fishermen and Euro 9.7 million for the traders. We were totally surprised, because of all the approval we were given till now. We had been working in line with the EU policy, which sees market (supply) regulation for the benefit of controlled fishing practices as one of the most important roles of the producer’s organisations. We also felt injustice, because small fishermen were being put on a par with big telecom and oil companies.

The first response of our fishermen was to blockade the fishing port of Lauwersoog, which has the largest shrimp fishing fleet of Europe, with the purpose of catching the attention of our government for our cause. Through our women in fisheries network *VinVis*, a

colleague fisherman's wife and I took the opportunity to hand over a letter to EU-Commissioner Fishler during the Women in Fisheries Conference of January, 2003. In this letter we explained about our problem and asked for help. Mr. Fishler promised us a reply, which we received some weeks later. In his reply, Mr Fishler said that the Commission would investigate the matter.

In the Netherlands, we (women) worked in close co-operation with our fishermen's leaders to approach politicians and government officials to mobilize support for our cause. Many journalists came to our house. This was not easy, because we had no experience with the media. Sometimes we felt misled when some journalist twisted our story, only looking for sensation. Often we felt more miserable, because it was very depressing to tell our problems again and again.

While we were busy with our advocacy campaign on the land, our husbands went to sea fishing. They had to go, because of the high investment loans, which had to be repaid. The prices collapsed and our husbands had to go for longer and further fishing trips. We had no family life anymore. Some (bigger) fishermen had catches, which were 7 times bigger than the quantity of the trilateral agreement. Within a short period of time the cold stores of the traders were completely filled and they stopped buying shrimps in the market (they only buy from their contract fishers!).

After some weeks the smaller inshore fishers, including my husband, could not harvest anymore. We women went to the bank again and again to ask for new loans or to ask for postponement of repayment. Our husbands got filled with negative energy and our community began falling apart. The relationships among the fishermen became very tense, because of fierce competition for the resources and there were deeds of aggression against some of the fishermen, who were seen as not being in solidarity.

I feel very privileged to live with my husband and children in our very beautiful old fishing village which has a very long historical bond with the sea. Everybody of our village and even our region has in one way or the other some relationship with fisheries and the sea. That is why I hope that unity will return for the sake of preserving a future for our children and our community. Recently I was elected as a board member of our local fishermen's organisation. My mission is to bring back unity among the shrimp fisher community and to

find support for our cause. I also want to have a family life again. I feel strengthened by the support of our women in fisheries network *VinVis*. Also when I am down, I can always call on some one of the network to talk with.

We are almost 6 months further now. Thanks to our campaign and the support of the Dutch Fishermen's Organisation, our case is being discussed now in our national and also in the European parliament. All speak now about the importance of our shrimps fisheries for employment, historical and social reasons. We hope for a solution, but for many of us it may be too late. We try not to loose hope for better times ◆

Randi Marie Nielsen
Secretary of Norwegian
fishermen's wives association
Norway

Randi Marie Nielsen is the only employee of the Norwegian fishermen's wives association. She explains that the durability of fishing communities depends in large part from the participation of women in fishing life.

By the turn of this century the fishermen were organised in local fishermen's associations. The aim was to propose the fishermen's opinions and rights. The women organised too, but exclusively through different social and humanitarian women's clubs - where the main objective was not to improve their own condition, but to contribute to improve others' condition.

It took long time before associations - who turned their attention to the fishermen's wife's situation - were established. While the local fishermen's associations grew up at the turn of the century, it took 40 -50 years before the fishermen's wives organised their work along the coast. These associations were first of all working with social matters.

During the first ten to fifteen years these local fishermen's wives associations worked within their own local community. But as time went by and several local (fishermen's wives) associations were established, the thought of holding common meetings or even connecting the local associations were coming up.

At the same time the Norwegian Fishermen's association discussed how to organise relationship between the fishermen's associations and the fishermen's wives associations.

In 1953, Norwegian Fishermen's wives association was established as an integral part of Norwegian Fishermen's association. The aim was to work with matters which became important to the fishery population and support work of the Norwegian Fishermen's Association's for better living conditions for the fishery population. This was the beginning of what we today call the Norwegian Fishermen's Wives Association.

In the 1970's, the equality of status was on the political agenda in Norway. The woman's liberation movement grew, but first in the last years of the seventy's the fishermen's wives seriously looked at their own position in the fishery communities. They demanded to become visible, and to have influence. Until then the Norwegian Fishermen's Wives Association had been an integral part of the Norwegian Fishermen's Association. During this period the wish to become a more independent organisation became stronger.

To shorten the history - in 1982, the Norwegian Fishermen's Association decided that the Norwegian Fishermen's Association and the Norwegian Fishermen's Wives Association should be independent but co-operating organisations. Norwegian Fishermen's Wives Association should be responsible for their economics situation and activities. The Norwegian Fishermen's Association should include in the budget an annual contribution to the Norwegian Fishermen's Wives Association (NFK).

In 1983 NFK became an independent organisation with laws, working program and secretariat. Today NFK has about 2500 members. These members are spread over 86 local associations - again connecting in 11 county associations. The highest governing body of NFK is the congress, which consists of delegates elected by the county associations. Ordinarily the congress meets every third year. In the intermediate periods authority is exercised by the national Committee, consisting of 3 members elected by the Congress. The secretariat of NFK has one employee. The purpose of NFK includes social and cultural fields in the local communities and in particular the economics and social rights of the fishermen's wives and their families.

In the beginning the main activities of the local wives associations embraced the social and welfare field. Today these activities are one of many. The activities of NFK are diversified. Some local associations act just like welfare clubs in the local communities. Others are engaged in welfare activities for the fishing fleet, safety and working conditions in the

fishing fleet, rescue service, health service for the fishermen, relief arrangement, insurance arrangements, matters which concern the local communities, like kindergartens, building swimming pools and so on.

The fishermen's family's social and economics circumstances and rights in the society - have always been a central matter of NFK. The fishermen's family's social and economics conditions are influenced by the situation of resources in the ocean and the government's fishery policy. As a result of this NFK finds it is natural for it to engage in fishery policy matters; for instance exploitation of fish resources, control of fish quality, actions against contamination in the ocean etc. The fishermen's wives have found that the fishery policy which is in the control of the Norwegian government also touches them. Through the engagement in the fishery policy NFK wish to stress the following; if the fishery communities are going to be good places to live for women, it is important that the fishermen's wives propose their view of the fishery policy.

NFK is engaged in taking care of the living conditions of the local communities. In recent years politicians have expressed their worries about women who move from the coastal communities, thus influencing the settlement structure. Women move into cities where they can get jobs and education.

We all know the saying: "*When the bait has gone, the fish follows*". This problem was taken seriously by the politicians. In 1986, for the first time in history resources of the state were dispersed to enterprises for women in fishery communities. This gave NFK the possibility to become involved as an organisation in establishing new places of work for women in coastal Norway. NFK was granted state resources to run programmes for women living in coastal areas to start their own enterprises. The results have so far been promising.

NFK is also engaged in international co-operation. In 1989, NFK participated in a money aid for women in the third world organised by Norwegian Television. NFK gave grants to a fishing school for girls in Angola. Since 1989, NFK has co-operated with fishermen's wives in the Nordic countries too. As a result of this co-operation NFK has taken part in establishing fishermen's wives associations in Færøyene and Åland - a little isle which belongs to Finland.

Many years hard work have given results. In the 1980's NFK also took part in decisions bodies. NFK became as observer in the National Committee of The Norwegian Fishermen's Association. We also have memberships in several others committees. Our co-operation with The Norwegian Fishermen's Association, together with our participation in different societies have definitively effected our organisation, and given NFK the possibility of influence where serious decisions are made. ◆

M*ichèle Pendelièvre*
Retired collaborative spouse
France

It is not easy for women's organisations to get involved in the debate regarding fisheries management: they are only invited at times of crisis, and they are undermined by internal disputes. However, the general implementation of transferable quotas is an urgent issue for us, as this will bring about the concentration of the sector.

Historically, in the fishing sector, women have always had "their role" on land. They have always acted as a means of support, managing the definite day-to-day tasks. French fisheries Committees have never included them in their meetings, or not to any great extent. Some women were sometimes represented in working commissions like the Social Commission and the Training Commission, where there were no male objections to their presence. Women are perceived to have a sensitivity that confines them to fields which are clearly defined by men in this sector. There is no problem with women becoming involved during serious crises – they make up the numbers and their initiatives are welcomed.

When we finally had the possibility to meet, and then to form associations at national level, our main objectives were:

- To set up a federation,
- To develop the status of "collaborative spouse", and to limit its damaging effects in the smallest companies⁶,
- The overall defence of the fishing sector,

⁶ Small companies often have difficulties to raise funds from the business to pay the social contributions: their gross earnings are not sufficient enough. For instance, some women are declared to work part time in the business, to pay lower contributions.

- To make ourselves known among the participants in this sector (public authorities, politicians, the media, professional organisations, researchers, NGOs, etc).

Leading a group is not an easy task, particularly when the group in question gathers together women who may or may not be working for family-run businesses, whose husbands and partners practice different fishing gears. From the outset, we avoided all subjects which could break up the group. We know the issues dividing fishermen, as we are all individually informed of the conflicts surrounding their activity: management of resources, zonal conflicts, clashes between professions and the type of fishing (industrial, small-scale), etc.

The links uniting women, other than friendship, are therefore:

- Belonging to a certain sector
- Improving the status of "collaborative spouse"
- Safety at Sea
- Health
- The social security system for fishermen

As soon as a member introduces a subject which causes conflict within the industry, but which is directly relevant to women within the association, we do not succeed in debating the issue objectively: the discussions are heated. Everybody has to make a living, after all! Therefore, silence reigns. Talking about the management of resources also had ecological connotations which put off quite a lot of members. They came up against the weight of the environmental associations which decried, in their words, the "nasty predatory fishermen". The term "overfishing" appeared more and more often in the media.

Over the course of time, women became aware of the importance of managing resources: the previous management policy threw the survival of the fishing industry and their future into doubt. The management of resources through the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been in place for decades, along with the decommissioning schemes. Many fish processing industries have been closed down, putting coastal women out of work.

Analysis and study have been undertaken step by step along some parts of the coastline. For example, training was organised by the association for the development of maritime activity (CEASM) following a women's request. We undertook the first analysis with regard to the report written by C. Fraga, a Member of the European Parliament, which recommended the establishment of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs). We have witnessed the privatisation of resources and the eventual concentration of fishing rights granted to only a few people. The examples of various other countries which have introduced this kind of system (Canada, Iceland etc.) appear very worrying to us.

The second piece of work consisted in the Green Paper on the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002. This was read and commented upon by the associations, which gave their observations to the General Fisheries Directorate in Brussels.

Furthermore, during each national meeting, private conversations between women revealed thoughts on:

- The harmonisation of regulations on fishing gears and the size of meshes,
- The halt to fishing once a quota has been reached for a particular species (what happens next for fishing companies who depend on the species in question?),
- Fishing within three nautical miles (not always respected),
- A stop to too many infringements,
- Industrial fishing (which plunders resources)
- The operation of POs (Producers' Organisations)
- The introduction of triploid oysters into shellfish production, and other species viewed as being threatening.
- Pollution, be it visible or invisible

Managing resources has become an obvious need for all women as has understanding the issues needed for gaining access to discussions. But information on the nature and timing of various conferences, seminars and meetings do not reach us. Invitations are sent out sparingly. Women, often have to take part in conferences at their own expense, in order to listen to researchers (economists, biologists and others), fishermen, politicians and institutions speaking about our sector, because "*when you are talking about survival, we want to know about it*".

In our opinion, this resource management policy does not take into consideration the human dimension, and the scientific jargon is difficult to understand. New measures announced for the CFP, such as restrictions on fishing certain species or the decommission of boats with no redundancy package for the crew are having an effect on our daily lives, with us being powerless to act. The CFP worries women. This sector only represents 1% of the European GDP. It is therefore small, and European history shows us that some sectors may be abandoned without a great fuss being made about it ◆

4 -

*Women as a pillar of collectives
actions defending coastal way of life
and culture*

Gerrard Siri

*Professor and Researcher at University of
Tromsø
Norway*

Improvement in daily life, the rejection of centralised politics, fisheries management: women from Finmark (northern Norway) have been tackling all these issues for the past thirty years. They are now fighting to find new people to replace them, as militant action is not without its risks.

In the 1970s, on the “Roof of Europe”, women felt that if they wanted to see things change, it was up to them to act. In Finmark, these women, who are often involved in politics, are taking matters into their own hands. Here are a few examples of the initiatives they have taken.

In 1986, they grouped together to insist on their right to give birth at home rather than in a hospital 200 kilometres away, and got the public authorities to agree to providing midwives in their community.

In the 1980s, the fishing industry was only interested in the quantity of fish. But the women emphasised the importance of quality for certain markets (restaurants, etc.), and branched into the fish processing business.

On 18th April 1989, – a day that has become symbolic – five women from a Nordic island spoke out against the government's decision to ban cod fishing. They raised awareness of another perspective: "*not only are we fighting for a way of fishing, but also for a way of life*". Calling a ban to this type of fishing signalled the death knell for small boats. These

women succeeded in starting up a debate, with the help of the media, and were granted a moratorium.

This gave rise to a women's network being created in Lapland. This network held many meetings and seminars. *"We used these events to exchange opinions. We organised peaceful public protests. One of our major successes was that we have created greater public awareness of coastal regions. We have been able to safeguard jobs, schools and services. But it is difficult to maintain these results in the long term, because as soon as women stop protesting, the situation starts to deteriorate"*. It is above all in periods of crises that women group together to the greatest effect, and that certain issues are exposed. The women use their organisational experience from the social sphere in their various initiatives. The idea is to widely and rapidly spread awareness from a local initiative, using the media. Women's initiatives are aimed at maintaining a good quality of life, preserving public services, consolidating jobs, and acting on fishing and social policy. Their initiatives always have the widest possible collective aims. The average age of members is between 50 and 60 years old.

Their commitment has a price: some women lost their jobs, while others were subject to harsh criticism. *"We might be practicing a kind of modern witchcraft: in the Middle Ages in the north of the country women, who disputed political decisions coming from the South, were burned. It is not always easy to be at the forefront of these initiatives, but it is an essential part of democratic life"* ◆

I I I -

F I N A L D I S C U S S I O N

Return to women's concerns

Katia Frangoudes, France:

"Let's talk more about women's actions and leave the discussion on safety for now. At European level, all the Member States have more or less the same standards in terms of insurance, social security, etc. Let's take a look at the situation of women in the fishing industry and aquaculture and re-focus the debate on the action women have been taking."

Cristina Moço, Portugal:

"One of the roles of women's associations is to raise awareness of the need for prevention in health matters. Prevention, which manifests itself through a doctor's visit and a certificate, is currently viewed as an obstacle to production. Men are only willing to visit a doctor when fishing is impossible due to boat breakdowns, or other problems."

Anne Marie Esteban, France:

"After an accident at sea, a lot of fishermen go back out to sea using sedatives. There are no regulations or checks for this kind of thing."

Pencha Raposo, Spain:

"We all agree that women look at the bigger picture and are more based on ideas than men, who base themselves on facts. There are forty women here, and we can really change the world. We have a great deal of power if we decide to use it. But we are currently placing ourselves in the background, behind men. We have to decide on a way to work together."

Françoise Edmonde Morin, France:

"The maritime prevention institute in Lorient offers a diagnostic aid for vessel safety. The problem is that the recommended safety equipment cannot always be installed on old vessels. Improving safety therefore requires a modernisation of the fishing fleet. But for this, the costs take a sharp upturn" ◆

On the difficulties of making women's associations last

Françoise Edmonde Morin, France:

"There are acute funding problems, and we can find shared solutions. To some extent, we can get round management problems and re-focus ourselves on the things that bring us together. Then, there is the issue of militant renewal. As Siri Gerrard emphasises, the single life age is often raised, and some weariness can be felt. Finally, we have to make sure that women capitalise on their fight and gain recognition – that men's unions, producer organisations or the State do not deprive them of their honours. A seven-year funding contract, like the Norwegian Association of fisherwomen got, is already something. In France, funding is granted over one year, which could put organisations at risk."

Randi Marie Nilsen, Norway:

"However, in spite of the contract, we have to request funding every year and justify our requests. And the amount of funding decreases every year. We have to justify our expenses in order to renew aid. This is complicated to manage."

Cornélie Quist, Netherlands:

"In the Netherlands, we were faced with two rival fishermen's organisations. We asked ourselves how we would overcome this confrontation and we decided to act at European level. I think we are all victims of EU policy and male domination. We have to work in unity."

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

This network of women has to carry on its work in spite of its financial difficulties. It is important to continue to use European funding to unite fishermen's wives. We have to pool our efforts so that the Commission is satisfied and allocates us further funding."

Nicki Holmyard, Scotland:

"The construction of a women's network has come up against a problem with communications and the transmission of information. What could the solutions be?"

Katia Frangoudes, France:

"According to the definition of the European Commission, the FEMMES network is a thematic network, which means a meeting between the world of researchers and citizens – in this case fishermen's wives. During the third workshop, which is to take place in Santiago de Compostela in November 2004, researchers will present citizens with their views on what they have heard. Furthermore, they will draw up an agenda which will present the claims of women in the fishing sector and address these claims to the political decision-makers. A second agenda will be drawn up in order to display the need as regards research carried out on women in the fishing and aquaculture fields. The two agendas will be distributed at different levels: local, regional, national and European.

Carina Rönn, Finland:

"Some women's associations have contacts and media connections that they should use in order to develop the network and raise awareness of the issues. A European organisation lends us additional influence and enables us to enter into men's organisations. Perhaps improved training in the CFP and its impact should be provided to women. Several claims coming from women reflect on the definition of the fisheries policy. It is important that we properly understand the issues."

Siri Gerrard, Norway:

"We have plenty of ideas, but not so much funding. We could enlarge the network to associations from other countries that are not with us today. However, we are not obliged to agree on about everything! Read the Commission's White Papers: there is never any question about the way of life of fishing communities and the problems posed by fishing quotas. We have to initiate the debate and contribute to progress, even if we do not yet fully understand politics. We will learn! Furthermore, what role do the researchers take in these actions? What methods should be followed?"

Brid Duff Duncan, Ireland:

"We have something in common: fish. We have to educate ourselves about our own needs within our own groups in each country. Common subjects, however, are desperately necessary in order to act at a European level. We do not represent the industry, the network is vital for it."

Sheryll Murray, United Kingdom:

"I would like to end on this note. We have a common interest – the common fisheries policy. The protection of the environment is a central issue. This network gives us common ground and enables us to speak with a single voice at the European Commission."

Pencha Raposo, Spain:

"For something to happen, somebody has to have a dream. I have no doubts about the longevity of this network. But information still has to be spread to the women in our countries, and also to the media."

Gunda Nilsen, Norway:

"Norway is not a member of the European Union, but we are asking ourselves what such a network can achieve and what benefits it can bring."

Siri Gerrard, Norway:

"Carrying on the network and distributing information is not all. We must go further. For example, we could submit recommendations to the European Commission. We have to meet the relevant politicians face to face – even if only for ten minutes. We have to go forward in a more structured manner."

Joan O'Doherty, Ireland:

"A face-to-face meeting requires us to learn more about political manoeuvring."

Cornélie Quist, Netherlands:

"It is less a lack of knowledge than a lack of self-confidence."

Katia Frangoudes, France:

"The issue of creating a European network of fishermen's and aquaculturists' wives will be raised next year, during the third workshop in the FEMMES programme. You can decide for yourselves what kind of path you would like to see the programme take in the future ◆"

**P R O G R A M
&
L I S T O F T H E P A R T I C I P A N T S**

PROGRAM



WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SPACE

2nd WORKSHOP “FEMMES”



VASA – FINLANDE

**Best Western Hotel Silveria,
From the 25th to 27th of September 2003**

Thursday 25 September 03

9 to 9.30

Welcome by Carina Rönn and Katia Frangoudes
Kjell Nybacka : Introduction to Finish fisheries sector

9.30 to 12.30: Origins and functions of fisherwomen organisations

9.30 to 10.30

➤ *What are the initial motives to form fisherwomen organisations 1 (chairman: Kjell Nybacka)*

- ➔ **Sherryl Murray** (UK): What are the initial motives to form fisherwomen organisations
- ➔ **Prudencia Santsmarinas Raposo** (SP): ELLAS MISMAS. Las mariscadoras gallegas protagonistas de su proceso de cambio
- ➔ **Lena Talvitie** (FI): Fiskarkvinnor i österbotten
- ➔ **Yolande Allanic** (FR): L'association « Femmes entre terre et Mer »

Questions

10.30-10.45 : coffee break

10.45-12.15 :

➤ *What are the initial motives to form fisherwomen organisations 2 (chairwoman: Cornelia Quist)*

- ➔ **Brid Duff Duncan** (IRL): Mna Mara Irish fisherwomen Organisation
- ➔ **Patricia Paredes Soto** (SP): ¿Cuáles fueron los motivos iniciales que impulsaron la creación de la asociación “Rosa dos Ventos”?
- ➔ **Gunnel Edman-Blom** (SE): What are the initial motives to form fisherwoman organisations?
- ➔ **Anne Marie Esteban** (FR): Origines et Action de l'Association UHAINA

Discussion

12.15-13.45 Lunch 🍴

Afternoon 13.45-17.30

13.45 to 15.00:

➤ *What are the initial motives to form fisherwomen organisations 3 (chairwoman Joan O'Doherty)*

- ➔ **Carmen Serano Soller** (SP): Pesca Costumbres y género
- ➔ **Liliane Capobianco** (FR): Création de l'Association de femmes de pêcheurs Corses
- ➔ **Gunda Nilsen** (N): What are the initial motives to form fisherwoman organisations: Bakgrunn for danningen av organisasjon Norges Fiskarvinnelag
- ➔ **Isabel Perez** (SP): La organizacion de mujeres vinculadas al marisqueo en Cambados

Discussion

15.00-15.30

➤ *Conducting and managing fisherwomen association / Relation with other representative structures 1 (chairwoman Gloria Cabrera Socorro)*

➔ **Cornelia Quist** (NL): Organizing women in fisheries in the Netherlands. The experience of the Women in Fisheries Network of the Netherlands (VINVIS): Process and strategies, successes and constraints.

➔ **Randi Marie Nielsen** (N): Conducting and managing fisherwomen association

15.30-1600: coffee break

16.00-17.30 :

➤ *Conducting and managing fisherwomen association / Relation with other representative structures 1 (chairman José Pascual)*

- ➔ **Annie Rouquette** (FR):
- ➔ **Sherryl Murray** (UK): Relations with men professional organisations
- ➔ **Françoise Edmonde Morin** (FR): Gérer les associations de femmes.

Discussion

Friday 25 September

8.30 to 17.00 : Fisherwomen within public action

8.30 – 10.00

➤ *Safety at sea/ psychological support in a case of catastrophe events at sea / legal recognition of missing or died men (chairwoman Begona Pintos)*

➔ **Liliane Capobianco** : Accompagnement des victimes en mer et le rôle des assistantes sociales en France (FR)

➔ **Joan O'Dhoherty** (IRL) : Safety at sea Irish example

➔ **Liliane Carriou** (FR) L'importance du rôle des femmes a la securité à bord des navires de pêche

➔ **May Britt Bratserth** (N) Safety at sea/psychological support in a case of catastrophe events at sea/legal recognition of missing or died men

➔ **Sonia Bourhis** (FR) : Travail Associatif sur le soutien psychologique

Discussion

10.00 to 10.30 : coffee break

10.30- 12.15

➤ *Promoting artisanal fisheries / recognition of women contribution/ legal issues / Developing training schemes for fisherwomen / Participating in fisheries management debate and policy process (Chairwoman Christine Escallier)*

➔ **Marriet Groen** (NL): To safeguard family and fish "experiences of a fisherman's wife in the struggle of shrimp fishing community for a better life and environmental sound fisheries

➔ **Sonja Hellen Sele** (N): Promoting artisanal fisheries/recognition of woman contribution/legal issues

➔ **Monique Philippe** (FR): L'association des femmes de marins pêcheurs du Bassin d'Arcachon

➔ **Sherryl Murray** (UK)

➔ **Michelle Pendelièvre** (FR): La gestion des peches et les organisations de femmes

Discussion

12.15-13.45: Lunch ☺

13.45-15.00:

➔ **Siri Gerrard** : Fisherwomen's actions for a better life in 1989/90 and in the new millennium: From collectivisation to marginalisation and privatisation?

➤ *General discussion (Katia Frangoudes)*

Discussion

15.00-15.30: coffee break

15.30-17.00

Discussion and future of the thematic network

Saturday 26 September

Visit of Camilla's processing fish workshop where we will have lunch with Camilla's products / Visite de l'atelier de transformation de Camilla

Visit of Bergö islands harbour / Visite du port de l'île de Bergö

Best Western Hotel Silveria
Ruutikellarintie 4,
tel. 358 6 3267611, fax : 358 6 3267610,
Vasa.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

WORKSHOP FEMMES

Vasa - Finland - 25, 26 & 27 September 2003

SPAIN

Begona Marugan Pintos

Instituto Social de la Marines

Carmen Serrano Soler

Mujeres "Tyrius" de El Palmar Valencia

Elena Marco-Soler

Mujeres "Tyrius" de El Palmar Valencia

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Isabel Perez Fernandez

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Teresa Chardi-Dasi

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Femmes entre Terre et Mer

Bourhis Sonia

Femmes entre Terre et Mer

Capobianco Liliane

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May Britt Bratseth

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Mariet Groen

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Christine Escallier

Universidade Madeira

Cristina Moço

Mutua dos Pescadores

Julia Ferreira

Mutua dos Pescadores

UNITED-KINGDOM

Duncan Brid Duff

Mna na Mara

Nicki Holmyard

Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers

Joan O'Doherty

Sheryll Murray

Fishermen's Association Ltd.

SWEDEN

Gunnel Edman-Blom

Länsstyrelsen Visby, Fiskarkvinnor

Länsstyrelsen Visby

Fiskarkvinnor



<http://www.fishwomen.org>